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New York



Vol. XXXVII

MAY, 1912

No. 1

A MAGAZINE OF **CLEVERNESS**

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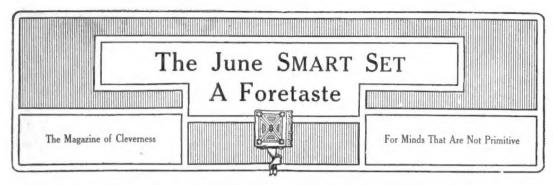
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JUNE IS ALWAYS A GOOD MONTH for The SMART SET. It is one of the months in which the magazine has most readers. The editors therefore are putting forth every effort to produce a particularly good June number—especially in view of the fact that this will be an anniversary number.

Just a year ago, with the issue of June, 1911, we did an unusual thing: we broke ourselves of a bad habit. The habit was that old time-honored, long-out-of-fashion, would-

be frisky cover design.

We discarded it, "canned" it, "skidooed" it to the limbo of to-be-forgotten things. With that issue the magazine passed definitely under the control of its present owners.

NEXT MONTH'S COVER AND THE EPIGRAM that goes with it have reference to a subject that soon or late touches us all, a certain act concerning which someone has said, "Whether you do or whether you don't, you'll be sorry for it." Perhaps you can guess what it is.

THE COMPLETE NOVELETTE will be "Casa Tanagra," by Gertrude Lynch, author of "The Wanderers," "Winds of the World," etc. It is an intense modern romance, keen, swift-moving, dramatic, fascinating. It concerns an Italian countess who flees from her profligate husband and takes refuge in New York, where she works as a lacemaker in a shop. But that is only the beginning of the story!

IT IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO ANNOUNCE a story by Mary Heaton Vorse; she has so thoroughly mastered the technique of story-telling and she has such a rare faculty of supplying the little touches that give life and reality to a piece of fiction. These qualities stand out in "The Spoiling of Rowena," a breezy and spirited little romance.

YOU WOULD NOT THINK IT POS-SIBLE at this time for anyone to invent a new method of telling a story. Yet that is exactly what the genial and ingenious Thomas L. Masson has done in "A Perfectly True Story." What that new method is everyone, we are sure, will want to discover for himself.

OTHER CLEVER AND ENTERTAIN-ING STORIES in this number are:-"Connors of the Camera Cohort," by Robert E. MacAlarney (wherein a quick-witted newspaper photographer assists a fashionable elopement and makes a great "beat"); "Katie Ryan and the Power of Thought, by Elizabeth Jordan (a humorous tale of an Irish cook and two poor artists, with an unlooked-for development); "Sonia's High Finance," by Anne Partland and Hector Alliott (a Russian woman desperately in love succeeds in making Wall Street the servant of her purpose); "The Pipe That Went Out," by Arthur Powell (a touching story of two young minstrels on a try-out before a formidable Master); "The Conquest of Richard the Silent," by Philip E. Curtiss (a polo story); "The Genius," by Marie Beaumarchef (a humorous character story with a French background).

AN ESSAY ON THE CEREMONY OF MARRIAGE, by Carl Holliday, will attract much attention; there will be a play by Captain Leslie Peacocke; a story in French; a number of clever sketches and poems; and the usual quota of witty epigrams and jests.

THE PRIZE WINNERS IN THE LETTER WRITING CONTEST will be announced, and Louise Closser Hale will give her views on the contest.

H. L. MENCKEN HAS ALL SORTS OF FUN with the poets of the day (giving honor where honor is due), and George Jean Nathan pays his respects in his brilliant, unconventional, inimitable way to the new plays and their players.

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SOMETHING EVERY AUTOMOBILIST SHOULD KNOW

YOU have probably realized for a long time that a good many more automobiles would be in use than there are at present if the expense of repairing and of maintaining them in such necessary things as tires, plugs, lamps, etc., could be reduced.

The high price of these various accessories is not due so much to their cost of manufacture as to the fact that by the time they reach the consumer from the factory they have gone through the hands of several agents, and their retail or list price must include the various profits of the manufacturer's agent, the jobber, the jobber's agent, and the dealer.

For instance, put the cost of the article as taken from the factory at \$5.00; add 15% (75c.) for the manufacturer's agent, making \$5.75; add 15% (86c.) for the jobber, making \$6.61; add 15% (99c.) for the jobber's agent, making \$7.60; add 25% (\$1.90) for the dealer, making \$9.50. Now if automobile owners could be supplied with their automobile accessories direct from the various factories with only one dealer's profit, every bill of \$9.50 which they now have would cost them only \$6.25. What a saving this would be, and what a boon to the owner! What a help it would be to the auto manufacturing industry! The dealers should think of this and help by joining in the fight for one profit, as it is manifest that it is to their interest to encourage automobiling by keeping down the expenses of the automobilist.

Every automobile owner will be glad to know that there is at least one concern which has had the enterprise to combat the present state of things and come out boldly and give the public an honest deal.

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conquer, which gives the dramatic touch to their lives that makes their rise to fame read like a fairy tale. You may read expert criticisms of every play of the day—enjoy beautiful photographs of all your favorite actors and actresses—their homes—their clothes and the staging of their plays.

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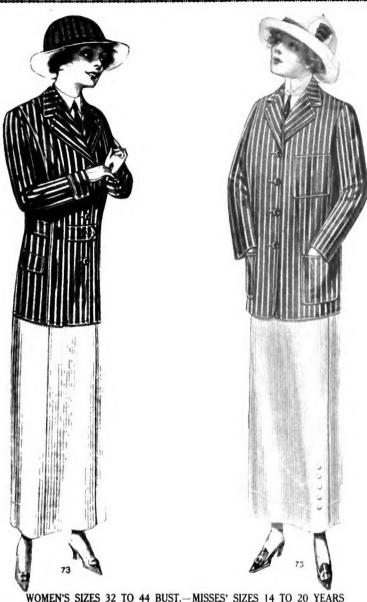
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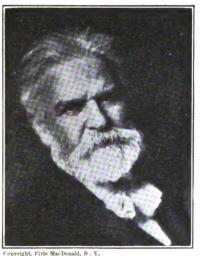
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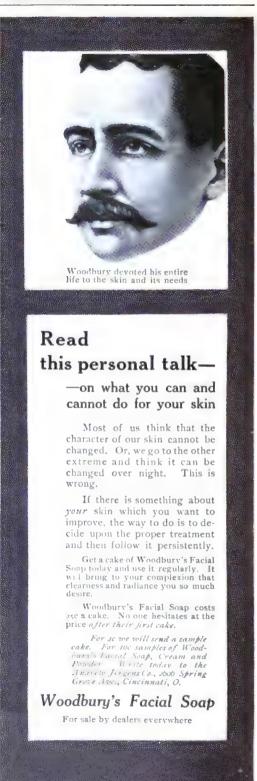
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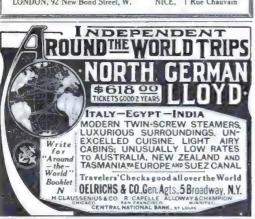
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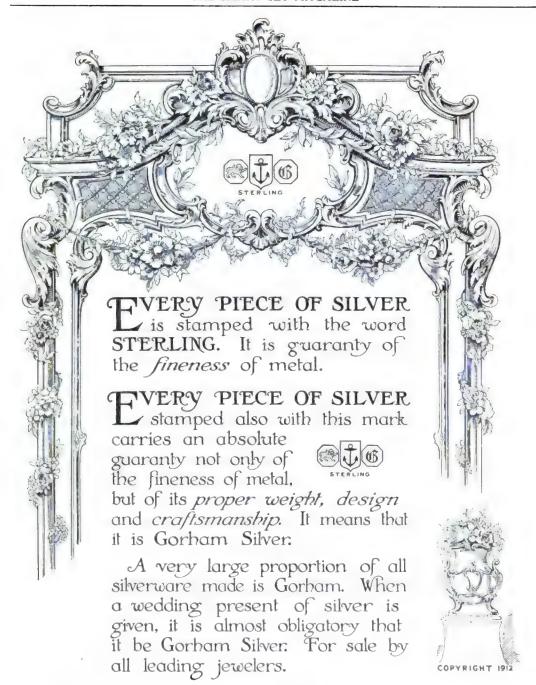
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IN BORROWED PLUMES

By Leroy Scott

THROUGH the great doorway a slender figure in silken dustcoat and coquettish motor bonnet stepped out upon the spacious marble-paved piazza. Slightly behind her moved a man servant of the purest blood—clean shaven, in plum-colored livery starred all over with brass buttons, with a bearing that was a miraculous blend of proud erectness and quiet deference. Face and manner might have come by direct and unpolluted descent from the chamberlain of a Norman king.

"I'll wait cut here, William—it's cooler," said the young woman, sinking into a wicker chair. "First tell Mr. Philip, and then a little later announce

me to Mrs. Dean."

The man's carven countenance gave no sign that he understood the strategy behind this command; yet understand he did. He gave a slight bow of obedience.

"Shall I have you served with anything, Mrs. Raymond?"

"Nothing, William."

He repeated his stately bow, an inclination of about one degree from the

perpendicular, and disappeared.

On the broad veranda young Mrs. Raymond sat waiting—excited, nervous—and gazed past the white columns of the Colonial front, down the terraced

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grounds, set with vases of the Italian Renaissance and with immaculately barbered shrubs, to the marble-margined Italian pool with its enclosing quadrangle of formal cypress trees. The grounds of Deanwood, like the house, had always the manner of supreme perfection and propriety—as though every morning before they made their appearance they had been bathed, and corseted and hair-dressed and gowned in latest mode by a corps of out-of-doors ladies' maids—as though they knew their lofty station and would not for worlds unbend from it.

Though the eyes of Mrs. Raymond were upon that proud, self-conscious landscape, her attention was divided between a clever campaign then forming in her head and listening for an expected

footstep.

The wise William knew the value to his purse not only of discretion but also of expedition, and so she had but a few minutes to wait. A young man of twenty-seven or eight came rapidly out of the house and crossed the marble pavement, a flush showing through the tan of his handsome face.

"Clara—you here?"

She rose. "Philip!" she breathed softly as she took his hand.

"Clara, may—may I kiss you?"

"Out here? Publicly? You're out of your head, boy!" She laughed a low mischievous laugh. "Besides, you did

it enough last night."

"But that was the first and only time," he urged. "Let's walk down there"—he motioned to the cypresses about the pool—"for, think of it, we've only been engaged for twelve hours, and you know—"

"Be sensible, Philip, and behave." She sat down. "I've come to talk seriously, and your mother'll be here any moment. Draw up that other chair."

He did so. Leaning back in the wicker chair, she smiled tantalizingly into his

flushed, almost boyish features.

"Are you really in love with me, Philip?" she mused. "Or is it just a mere summer malady that is going to pass with the summer—like hay fever at frost time? Is it just a—ah—a little hay fever of the heart?"

"Come, Clara—you mustn't be flippant about this. You know it's forever

with me!"

She shook her head. "Don't be too sure!"

"Forever!" he repeated. And looking into the dark, piquant, bonnet-framed face, he certainly had no thought but that it was.

"I thought perhaps after you had a chance to think it over you might be sorry you'd asked me. I thought, since you were tied down here by your mother, perhaps you might have just drifted into this thing because you had nothing better to occupy your time."

"I don't want anything better."

"So it isn't just a warm weather affair, then? Well, I didn't want you to commit yourself before you knew your own mind." She smiled an arch, provoking smile. "You see, my dear boy, it's up to me to protect you."

"Protect me?"

"I'm so much older," she explained.
"Older!" he cried. "You're twenty-five—"

"Six," she corrected.

"Twenty-six, then. Well, I'm twenty-

eight."

"And you're nothing but a boy, dear. While I'm an old woman—been mar-

ried, divorced—through it all. And not always an agreeable old woman, either, Philip—for I see now that I was often pretty nasty to Jack—though of course the fundamental trouble was that we really never loved one another. So, you see, it's my job to keep you from rushing into anything you'll be sorry for."

He leaned forward decisively. "I'm never going to be sorry over anything I

go into with you."

"Then in the cold gray light of the morning after you feel just the same?"

"You bet!"

"And you want to go ahead?"

"You bet!"

"All right." She raised a finger in playful warning. "Only remember, young man, that you are not to throw it up to me later that I didn't give you a chance to pull out. Well, that's all settled, then."

She gave him a bright, teasing smile. "Don't you think I'm a pretty brazen specimen of the new woman—rushing over to court you before your breakfast is decently swallowed?"

"You're just the specimen—"

"Don't talk like other men, Philip. H'm—it seems to me that you look a little conceited over the idea of such devotion from a woman. Just to puncture your conceit, I beg to inform you that I didn't come to court you. I came to court your mother."

"Court my mother!" he said blankly. She leaned nearer. Mischief disappeared from her face, and it became

serious.

"Yes, your mother. If we're going to make any headway, we've got to start by realizing that your mother doesn't care a lot for me."

"I say, Clara—" he began a little

awkwardly.

"Oh, you know that's so, Philip. Of course she's polite—even friendly. But to her mind the poles were created for one sole purpose—me to sit solitary at one and Mrs. Sherman Dean of Deanwood to hold court at the other. Don't I know her ambition, though? Yes, we've got to recognize that the idea of marriage between you, the last of the

Deans, and me—why, it would be worse to her than heart disease. We both know that her greatest dream is to marry you to gilt-edged social position."

Young Dean moved uneasily in his chair. "You think then, that my mother

is—is—"

"She certainly is! I don't want to hurt your feelings, Philip, but some time I've got to tell you exactly what I think about your mother, and if we're going to break over her, we'd better break now. She's a terrific snob. There's no greater snob than the woman who has married above her into the best society. That sort of woman would rather die than do any natural thing that doesn't seem to strengthen her social position. Why, just see how she has treated you!"

He ran a half-clenched hand through his close cropped brown hair and frowned

for a moment.

"It's partly my own fault. I've been too easygoing—have not stood out enough for my rights—have counted too much on the future." He hesitated, then spoke out: "I love my mother—and she's intended to be good to me—but in the main I guess you're right."

"Of course I'm right!"

He looked at her intently. His face took on a strange new glow. He leaned near her.

"Clara," he said abruptly, "we have never talked a great deal about ourselves—serious, intimate things, I mean."

"No."

"Shall I tell you a great secret—a very great secret?"

"What is it, Philip?"

"I think it may surprise even you. It's a pretty long story. For years, Clara—"

"If it's long, hadn't you better tell me later?" she interrupted. "Your mother may be here in a second, and I must finish telling you my plan."

The rising glow died slowly out of his

face.

"All right. Your plan, then."

"I'm here to ask your mother over to lunch with me. That's just a beginning. I'm starting out to charm her; I'm going to make her like me. I don't know how it will work out, but that seems our best game for the present."

The young man almost exploded.

"Clara, I'm against such puttering diplomacy! I'm in favor of telling the whole thing straight out now!"

"If you do, you'll—" A step and a swish of lingerie came through the wide

doorway. "Not a word!"

They sank back into attitudes of mere casual friendship just as a tall and somewhat stout figure came out upon the veranda. She looked to be about fifty, but her bearing showed that in being fifty she had conferred a particular honor upon that age. Her chin was a trifle fuller, her mouth a little firmer, her eyes a little more direct and sharp, and her nose had a little more of the imperial droop than was needed for purposes of perfect beauty. One glance at her showed that pride, despotic pride, had its highest throne in her majestic person.

An unusual excitement showed in her lofty face as she crossed the veranda.

"Good morning, Clara; I'm very glad you ran over." She held out the morning paper which she carried. "Have you seen this thing about the Countess D'Autreval?"

"I haven't looked at a paper today,"

returned Clara.

"But you have been reading about her?"

Clara had. She could not well have avoided doing so, for the New York dailies had been full of that dashing young widow, favorite of the smartest set of Paris and writer of those witty, daring books about Parisian society. She had landed the morning before, her purpose in America being, as the press reports for the last week had made known, to write one of her clever books about society on this side of the Atlantic.

"What do you think," Mrs. Dean went on excitedly—"the Countess has

mysteriously disappeared!"

"Disappeared!" cried Philip. "You don't mean there's been foul play?"

"No, no. She called for her hotel bill last night, paid it and then suddenly vanished—no one knows where. It seems it is all because of that book of hers. She let drop enough last night to

let it be easily deduced that she intends moving about fashionable resorts incognita, in order that she may see society when it is not posing before her for its picture."

Clara's dark eyes were sparkling with

amusement.

"What a lark she'll have! But I've heard that the dear Widow D'Autreval

is—h'm—a pretty gay person."

Mrs. Dean looked stern reproof at her would-be daughter-in-law. "The Count-ess is of the very oldest French aristocracy, and has been received with distinguished favor at almost every court of Europe."

Clara was unruffled by this rebuke.

"It's a clever idea—and I'll bet she gets some mighty intimate and racy stuff."

"I have one regret over her having taken this course," commented Mrs. Dean, in the best casual manner of the grand dame, striving not to appear proud. "I had a note from Mrs. Van der Grift, saying she had given the Countess a letter of introduction to me. I had hoped the Countess would find it possible to be my guest for a time."

They chatted of this till the topic began to dull, then Clara spoke up:

"By the way, Mrs. Dean, I'm getting up a rather sudden little luncheon party for today—only a few, Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Grayson have already promised—and I motored over to ask if you wouldn't join us."

"I shall be very glad—"

"See here, I said I wouldn't stand for that!" cried Philip, springing up.

"Not stand for what?" queried his

motner.

"Philip!" warned young Mrs. Ray-

mond.

"It's got to come straight out!" he cried to his fiancée. He turned to his mother. "Mother, Clara and I are engaged."

Mrs. Dean rose slowly from her chair.

"What!" she ejaculated.

"Yes, we're engaged, and we are going

to be married!"

A warm color came into Mrs. Dean's aristocratic cheek. She stared at her son, then turned her majestic rage upon Clara.

"So that's what you divorced your husband for—to make trouble in my family!"

Clara gave back an undisturbed smile.

But Philip spoke up hotly.

"That's not so, mother! Clara and I had not even dreamed of such a thing at that time. And I think you can do no less than apologize to the woman I expect to marry."

"Apologize!" gasped Mrs. Dean, swelling to more majestic proportions.

"Of course not," Clara put in, still smiling her unruffled smile. "Come, Philip, don't get angry. Let's not have a quarrel."

The suggestion had more effect upon the mother than the son. He still glared, but she at least regained a measure of control. Her face grew hard.

"No, I hope we shall not quarrel, for I hope that you"—she was addressing her son—"will come to your senses. You know very well the sort of marriage I have planned for you, and you know very well that this thing you propose is not that sort of marriage."

"You speak to me," burst out Philip,
"just as a title hunting mother might
speak to a daughter she is trying to buy

a duke with!"

It was perhaps a secret sorrow with Mrs. Dean that Providence had not vouchsafed her a daughter for the purpose of buttressing her position with some such transaction; and she had long had the determination of repairing the negligence of Providence by devoting her son to this dreamed-of end.

"I speak to you as my child," retorted his mother majestically, though somewhat surprised at this show of rebellion on the part of her usually submissive son. "I desire to say nothing against Mrs. Raymond. But the plain fact is, she is not your social equal. I will not have it!"

"And I will have it!" he cried.

"If you make a fool of yourself and marry her, I'll cut off every cent of your income." Her lips curled. "I understand Mrs. Raymond lives upon her alimony. Perhaps you would like to marry her and share with her what her former husband sends her."

"Mother!"

"Why-" gasped Clara.

"I have said all I desire to say." And Mrs. Dean swept back into the house.

Philip gazed speechless at his fiancee. Her color was high, but she quickly had

herself under control.

"There isn't a word of truth in what she said about alimony, Philip. The judge ordered Jack to pay it, but I've sent every one of Jack's cheques back to his lawyers."

Philip in wrathful thought scarcely

heard her.

"Clara," he said abruptly, "you've got to call off that lunch engagement."

"Why?"

"Because we're going to jump into your car, get a license and get married."

"Against your mother's wishes?"

"Yes."

She shook her pretty, bonneted head. "If I run away with you and she disowns you, after a time you'll blame me for it and turn against me. None of that, thank you!"

"You know I'll do nothing of the sort. If that's your only reason, come on!"

The little head shook more decidedly. "That's my smallest reason. It's to be with your mother's consent or not at You heard what she said about my not being her social equal. I'm not from top notch people, I know. But who was she before she married your father? I suppose she forgets she was just an actress—and not much of an actress at that, only a stage beauty." The dark eyes flashed and the piquant face grew grim. "Do you think I'm going to get mixed up in a runaway match because I'm not good enough for your mother's son? After what she said, she's got to stand up in public and say 'God bless you' or there's nothing doing!"

"Oh, your attitude is all right," he cried impatiently, "but how the dickens are we going to get her consent?"

"Sit down and let's think."

With a half-choked oath he dropped into his wicker chair. He tried to think of some plan himself to bring his mother to time, but after a while he found himself watching Clara's face. It was tense; he saw it grow more excited; plainly her mind was charged with electric thought. Presently she seized the newspaper Mrs. Dean had left behind, and her eyes raced through the story about the Countess D'Autreval.

After a moment she sprang up, all

aglow.

"I've got it!"
He, too, arose.

"What is it?" he cried eagerly.

"Wait and see—this is my game!" she sparkled at him. She glanced at her watch. "Good-bye."

She turned and sped through the great hall, Philip following, and out to the porte-cochère where her car stood waiting.

"To the station, Pierre," she ordered the chauffeur. "Make the twelve o'clock

train for New York."

"But, Clara what's up?" Philip de-

manded breathless.

All the reply he got was a flushed, tantalizing smile, full of mischief and mystery—and then the big French car swept noiselessly down the curving drive.

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WHILE this scene was acting itself out upon Mrs. Dean's veranda, Mildred Grantley had been keeping a weary but eager eye upon the manager's door, and when the pasty-faced, oldish youth came out again from that golden portal of opportunity she quickly caught the sleeve of his green uniform.

"Can't I see Mr. Huxheim now?"

"Sorry, Miss Grantley, but he's still engaged," replied the young man with perfunctory politeness.

"But I was the first one here this morning," she protested, "and I've been

waiting two hours!"

"I'll get you in as soon as he can see you. Mr. Huxheim has a lot of previous engagements." And the blasé youth, whose code it was to scatter courtesy only where his superiors saw fit to be polite, passed quickly on to his desk near the entrance of the waiting room and resumed the reading of the Morning Telegraph.

Mildred Grantley flushed. She knew

the pimply guardian of the great Huxheim's door was lying about Huxheim's engagements; and a moment later she had further evidence of this cheap decep-There tripped in an airy young person, dazzling in the most spectacular extravagance of the summer's fashion, with a plumy, swagger hat and skirt cut short to give a chance to her pert little feet in their high-heeled low shoes and diaphanous lavender hose. Mildred knew this dazzling apparition by sight -a showgirl whose off-stage performances had gained her miles of newspaper space and made her a sought-for feature by every producer of spicy musical comedy on Broadway.

"Morning, Billy," she chirped to the pimpled Cerebus. "Can I see Sam?"

The youth sprang up with alacrity. "Hello, Miss Bertram. Sure thing; no one's with him. I'll just tell him you're here."

A moment later Bertie Bertram tripped through the sacred door—leaving her signature in heliotrope upon the air behind her. Mildred's lips closed tighter. Miss Bertram was the twelfth person who had passed in ahead of her that morning. But the twelve had all in some way "made good" on Broadway, while she was only a "road actress" and had never won nearer the actor's paradise than a one-night stand in Schenec-

tady. She sat back in one of the stiff oak chairs whose cramping angles chastened to humility the suppliants for Sam Huxheim's favor, and grimly waited. If one accepted Bertie Bertram as the standard of feminine perfection, then Mildred Grantley was a poor plain thing indeed. There was nothing eve-compelling about her clothes—her serviceable gray suit would upon close observation have shown damning signs of wear; and her face had not that plump, audacious beauty to which Huxheim and his sort gave their endorsement. From another standard she might perhaps have had a somewhat higher ranking, even though at present she looked pale and tired and worried.

She waited—and the devil for his glee ha; devised no form of torment that

bites away the nerves as does waiting outside a managerial door. Presently Miss Bertram, with her comet's tail of heliotrope, swept from the office—but before Mildred could again edge in her request, through the coveted portal was ushered a corpulent, geranium-cheeked gentleman tailing the vivid odor of a hearty liquid breakfast.

Angry, disheartened but determined, she sat on. She picked up the morning paper with which she had armed herself against this tedious waiting. Once more she read the only matter that had at all caught her anxious mind—the sudden disappearance of the Countess D'Autreval from the Plaza Hotel. Despite her personal worry, Mildred could but smile at the Countess's daring device for gathering material for her book. What a lot of delicious private comedy the Countess was about to enjoy!

There was a rustle at the outer door of the waiting room, and there entered a young woman for whom all the sweating minions of fashion had done their sensational best. She spoke to the young man, then sighted Mildred. Toward Mildred she came with a pleased, if somewhat casual, smile.

"Hello, Millie! Haven't seen you for a century. What you been doing that's good for yourself?"

Mildred took the soft beringed hand and shrugged her shoulders.

"Same thing, Trixie. On the road."
"You haven't caught on yet?"

"About where I was when I was playing with you three years ago in 'The Prince's Box.'"

"Too bad, Millie. But your luck will change." She spoke with genuine sympathy; but the space of three sentences was about as long as Trixie Morton could keep her mind from herself. "Me—that was my last season on the road."

"I know how you've gone up."

"Been doing a little sketch in vaudeville this summer with my own company, and pulling down a thousand a week," Miss Trixie complacently ran on, telling the customary professional lie about her salary. "Closed last Saturday, and am in here to see what Sam Huxheim wants. He telegraphed me to show up this

morning."

She opened her bag and ran a powder puff over her full, high-colored face. Mildred's blood seemed suddenly to change to the acid of envy. The two of them were of the same age; she knew she had more brains than Trixie and more education, and she felt she was a far better actress; and yet here was Trixie receiving urgent telegrams from the great Sam Huxheim, while she was kept wearing out penitential chairs in the manager's waiting room.

"Doing anything now?" queried

Trixie.

"Got a little summer engagement."

"Where?"

"At one of the resorts."

"Tell you what," said the good-natured Trixie; "soon's I get through with Huxheim I'll take you to hunch and then we'll run out to your place in a taxi. Of course you're on for a matinee. I'd like to see your act."

"I—you see—you wouldn't care for it," said Mildred hastily and a little

lamely.

"No excuses—I'm going to see it; so it's all settled," said Trixie peremptorily.

"But I've got a lot of errands to see to,

and I'll have to rush-"

She was saved the necessity of completing her excuse by the large man just then emerging from Huxheim's door and Trixie's being summoned into the sanctuary. Left alone, her sudden embarrassment at Trixie's proposal subsided.

Trixie seemed to remain in with Huxheim interminably. Such favor! But at length she reappeared. She was radiant.

She caught Mildred by the arm.
"Say, have you been seeing all this
press agent dope about 'The Golden
Spoon'?" she asked excitedly.

"Yes, and for once the press agent told

the truth."

"What, you haven't been in London and seen the piece?" cried Trixie in surprise.

"No; I read it. Since its big London success the author has published the play. It's a really great comedy."

"You think so, too! That's what Huxheim said. Gee, but I'm a happy dame! What do you think—Huxheim's just offered me the woman lead in the piece!"

"You mean you're to be Mary Win-

ters?"

"Is that her name? Yes, I think that's what Sam called her. He said it was a fat part. And he said, too, that if I made a hit, and he was sure I would, he'd star me next season—and if he does, I'll sure push the stellar goods across the footlights. I'm a great comedienne, he says; just what the public wants. I tell you what," she ended enthusiastically, "Sam Huxheim is certainly the wisest mana-

ger in this little town!" After a moment she hurried away, forgetting to repeat her luncheon proposal. Mildred watched her out, with a hot uprush of envy and resentment. So that was what the manager wanted, what they made stars of! She was goodhearted enough, was Trixie, and had the popular sort of good looks, and had selfconfidence to the point of audacity, and had a sort of surface cleverness, and could go through her little catalogue of stage tricks—but without education or culture, or desire for either, and without one jot of real artistic ability, and with at the best only a poor pretense at the manners of a lady. And yet Trixie Morton was to play that delicate light comedy part of Mary Winters!

In a vague and quite hopeless way Mildred had yearned for a chance at Mary Winters when she had read "The Golden Spoon." She had felt the part; she had felt she could "get it across." And now it had fallen to Trixie Morton!

Unknown though she was, she knew she was a far better actress than Trixie. She knew it! She had a quicker intelligence, a finer taste, a greater range, a truer sense of dramatic values—and how she had slaved at her work in the six years that had passed since her father's misfortune had flung her from Wellesley out into the fight to make a living! If only she had Trixie's chance!

Čallers came and went, but still she sat unsummoned in her cramping chair—and others, people like her who had not yet made a hit, sat waiting with anxious, wistful patience. Lunchtime crawled around. She became desperate.

This was her last chance, for the present, at least. She had to report at two—and after today she had heard Huxheim would be out of the city for two or three weeks.

One o'clock struck. When the next caller passed out of Huxheim's door Mildred quickly seized the youthful watchman by the sleeve.

"I simply must see Mr. Huxheim—I

simply must!" she urged.

There was no one with a reputation waiting so the youth drawled, "I'll see," and disappeared into the office. The next moment his pimply face reappeared at the door.

"All right; but it can only be for a

minute."

Mildred, gripping her courage, stepped through the magic door and was in the presence of her employer for the last three years, a man whom she was now seeing for the second time—the great Sam Huxheim, who decided whether some thousands of actors should or should not act, who decided whether playwrights should or should not be heard, who decided what the public should and should not see. He sat at his mahogany desk, his back to her, apparently lost in a long letter. Above his desk, side by side, hung two autographed photographs. One was of a youngish gentleman in extremely meager garb—a pair of tights, to be exact. This personage was none other than that renowned performer, "Mix-up Mike," one-time lightweight champion of the world, the management of whose successful fistic career had launched Huxheim as a dictator in the field of dramatic art. The photograph that balanced the famous "Mix-up" was that of a great French actress whom Huxheim had managed in one of her recent "farewell" tours of America.

Huxheim pushed the letter from him and swung sharply about. He was a small, rotund man, with quick gray eyes and a heavy jaw. While in the sporting game he had discovered that the way to be conspicuous among his fellows was to wear quiet clothes and to keep diamonds out of his necktie and off his fingers; and the artorial policy then formed he still adhered to.

Mildred had heard that Huxheim could be jovial, even generous; but his face was now cold and impatient.

"You are Miss Grantley?" he snapped

out.

"Yes," she said quickly. "I was in one of your 'Lion's Share' companies last year. I did Janet."

"H'm. What do you want?" He did

not ask her to sit down.

The chance she had been struggling

weeks to get was now hers.

"Mr. Huxheim, I've been working hard, studying hard, for years," she said eagerly, rapidly. "I know I could make good here in New York if I had a chance. I know it! I've come to ask you for a part in one of your New York productions."

He looked her sharply over. She hardly breathed in her suspense.

His answer was quick, abrupt.

"Nothing for you now."

Her life almost went out. So that was the end of her hopes! She grasped at the last straw. "But later?"

"Later perhaps I can put you out on

the road."

"But—New York?"

"I might as well tell you now that you're not good enough for New York."

She flushed. "But you've never seen

me act!"

"McGuire saw you act all last winter. I've had McGuire's reports on you."

The flush deepened.

"And you take his word? That man doesn't know acting when he sees it! Besides, he had it in for me because—"

"Never mind," Huxheim interrupted. The next moment he seemed to relent and show a little human interest. "Doing anything now?" he asked.

"A summer engagement—at one of

the beach resorts."

"I suppose you'd like to have me run out and look over your act and see for myself what you can do?"

"No, no—it wouldn't give you a line on my work," she said hastily, not quite

able to conceal her sudden alarm.

The following instant she saw that her alarm had been needless. The slight sardonic smile that flickered into his face showed that in making his suggestion he

had merely been amusing himself with her.

"I don't need any further line on your work," he said. "The simple fact is, you can't act."

"I can't act!" She was thoroughly angry now, and as she saw there was no hope she did not try to restrain her wrath. "I can't act!" She took a step nearer the little monarch. "Let me tell you this, Mr. Huxheim—I can act an almighty lot better than Trixie Morton, whom you've just engaged for 'The Golden Spoon'!"

"So you think I should have picked you for Mary Winters?" he sneered.

"I can do Mary Winters a thousand times better than Trixie Morton!"

"Thanks for your recommendation," he said with cutting sarcasm. "I'll think it over. In the meantime—you'd better be hurrying off to your matinee."

And the little king of Broadway swung his back upon her.

Ш

TREMULOUS with that wrath which nauseates because of its impotence, and sick with that utter soul sickness which comes from the failure of a years long heart's desire, Mildred hurried out of Huxheim's office and away to her "summer engagement."

The fight had been a hard one with her—and, after all, not so much a fight as a long stretch of drudgery, with the drudgery made all the more wearing by the periods of poignant fear that there might not be any drudgery to do. The fight, the drudgery, seemed all the more tedious and dreary perhaps because of the bright background of the easeful years before her father's failure and death. Now and then, while on the road, she would chance in an old New York paper upon the spectacular marriage of Miss So-and-so, or the brilliant dinner at the home of young Mrs. Such-andsuch; and sitting in her cold hotel room away out in an Ohio or a Kansas town, she would smile a little wryly, a little humorously, and wonder what these old school friends would think if they could only see her now. "Mill" Grantley, whom they had looked upon as the cleverest of them all—doing parts in plays that had worn out their Broadway life three years before!

But she never envied these old friends or at least only occasionally, and then she envied them only their chance to rest and their surety about their next week's meals. She did not mind work. Quite otherwise; she loved it. The best she asked of fortune was a chance to do the kind of work she wished to do and felt she could do. But that chance had been denied her. Hers had been the sorry fate to have to play the cast-off parts of the more favored actors who had originated them. If she played the part in the manner of, and as well as, its originator, she got credit only as a good mechanical copyist; all the glory, in the minds of those above her, belonged to the person who had set the copy. And if she played the part better, if she tried to get some new spirit, some new ideas, into her portrayal, she was severely called down for not doing it in the patterned way, and her attempt to do real acting was regarded as a piece of "freshness" or as a "break."

Some there were who had perceived in her flashes of great acting ability and had buoyed her soul through the difficult years by telling her of her power. But none of these dramatic seers were managers; no manager who could recognize big acting when the acting was not done by a big name had ever seen her upon the stage.

At length Mildred reached the place of entertainment at which she had her "summer engagement." It was a huge pile, and daily drew ten times as large a "house" as any theater Sam Huxheim lorded over. She hurried in and was shot up by an elevator to the third floor, where she stepped out into a vast, formal wilderness, made soft to the foot with thick, dark green silken carpet, set with a forest of white pillars, and with here and there glinting and shimmering every one of the thousand shades that lie between red and violet.

A tall, erect and flat-backed lady in a rustling black gown intercepted her.

"You feel better, Miss Quayle, for your morning's rest?" she asked.

"Yes-quite all right," returned Mil-

dred hastily.

"Then will you put on the molecolored mousseline I shall send in to you

and come right out?"

Ten minutes later Mildred Grantley, or Gertrade Quayle as she was here known, was slowly promenading up and down in the tunic of mole-colored mousseline, the creation of a famous Paris dressmaker. Her face was quite without expression, but she bore herself with a grace that showed off the points of the late summer gown to perfection. Her audience consisted of three women, who studied the gown with languid criticalness.

Mildred Grantley's "summer engagement" was that of a model in the French gown department at Weber & Mikel-

ham's.

She had had to swallow a lot of pride before coming here, but it was either swallow that or run the risk, or rather certainty, of having little else to swallow. Her season on the road in "The Lion's Share" had ended in late March, and she had got back to New York with a few scanty dollars and before her the blank and barren season when the majority of theatrical folk can only sit and wait. She had tried for every sort of a half-salary engagement—in summer stock, to go the rounds of the summer resorts—but she had failed, as do the majority; and then in desperation she had begun to seek anything that would keep mere life in her till the opening of the theaters at the summer's end.

At Weber & Mikelham's they considered her a find. Never had they had a model who could move about in three hundred dollars' worth of chiffon and lace and tarnished gold with a manner not only of belonging in the gown, but with one that added a hundred dollars to the value of the merchandise. Old Mr. Weber, hearing of her, had come up and watched her through the shell-rimmed glasses that straddled the wide base of his ample nose. "Vell, vell, you're righdt—she sure does know how to vear clo'es," he had said to the head of the

department, who had answered with a nod and, "Just put a dress on her, and it's already sold." Which was the reason that, though the summer season had almost waned and there were few buyers, she had been kept on.

Perhaps if Sam Huxheim in his peregrinations had ever wandered into this theater of fashion, and had recognized this striking figure that floated about in the creations of Poiret and Francis and Worth, he might have thought that there was something in Mildred Grant-

ley, after all.

Mildred was sweeping up and down in the clinging tunic of jeweled and gilded mousseline when a fourth person was added to her audience. As she reached the end of her ten-yard promenade and turned, she gave an infinitesimal start as she saw the dark piquant face of the newcomer. Recognition flashed between the eyes of the two; then Mildred continued her graceful, stately parade.

"I should like to examine the gown," said the newcomer to the grand duchess figure who was managing the sale.

One of the languid onlookers suddenly

became alive with energy.

"I have just decided to buy it!" she

put in quickly.

"Oh, I only wish to examine the beadwork of the front," said the other easily, and walked to the middle of the floor and began to finger and study intently the beads of peridot green upon the cobwebby silk.

"Hello, Millie," she said beneath her

breath.

"Hello, Clara," whispered Mildred.
"You look a regular queen in those togs, Millie."

"Thanks," Mildred kept her model's

face straight ahead.

Clara Raymond spoke again. "Dine with me tonight—at Blakeley's. Six thirty—private room—headwaiter will show you—very important. You'll come?"

"Yes."

Clara eyed the garniture a moment longer, then slipped away; and Mildred continued her parade in her present gown, then in another. Four hours later the two friends—Clara Raymond was the only one of her old schoolmates with whom Mildred had maintained any sort of relationship—were kissing one another in a little India red private dining room at Blakeley's.

"Now what's up?" demanded Mil-

dred.

"Not a word till you've absorbed a man's size dinner and"-with a nod toward the waiter, and in a whisper-"till we've got rid of the undertaker."

"Hurry along the food then, for I'm dying to know what's in that little head of yours. By the way, Clara, I read a day or two ago that Mr. Raymond had just got back from abroad. Away for a year, the paper said. He must have been pretty badly cut up over your divorce."

"Oh, Jack was as glad to get loose as I was," Clara returned carelessly. "He didn't go away to cure a broken heart; he went over to study some of the new buildings. I'll say this for Jack—he's one of the cleverest and widest awake

architects in the country."

"What was the real trouble between you two? I always imagined I'd like him, even though I've never seen him. Was it just that Trixie Morton affair?"

"It was deeper than that. But see here, Mill, let's put my family skeleton back in its closet and turn the key. Thank heavens, there comes the soup. Now eat!"

"Well, here goes for a vivid imitation of a famished coalheaver. My, this food tastes divine after four months of Mrs. Rafferty's basement dining room!"

At last the impersonation of the coalheaving gentleman was completed, and at length the waiter performed his last inconsequential service and withdrew, closing the door upon his somber back.

"Now, Clara—out with it!"

manded Mildred.

"Don't be in a hurry, honey," returned Clara, though she was plainly a-tingle with excitement. "This is the first time I've seen you for a year, and I want to sound you a bit." She leaned back and regarded her friend with halfclosed eyes. "I judge the stage hasn't been trying to be particularly good to vou."

Mildred smiled wryly.

"Well, Frohman hasn't yet offered to sack Maude Adams and sign me up in her place."

"What are you going to do next?"

"I wish I knew!"

"H'm. Aren't you getting tired of the stage?"

"I'm tired to death of the kind of thing I've been doing. And I can't seem to break through into the real thing. I don't know why—but I can't."

"Why don't you marry? You must

have had a chance."

"Oh, a lot of the husband sex have paid me their devoirs—all very poor articles, though. Here I am, a fairly well preserved specimen of twenty-six, and a decent, worth-while man has never yet shown any anxiety to lead me altarward. If one did, he'd be sorry afterward—he'd get me so quick. Anyhow, that's the way I feel now."

To Clara's searching eyes, Mildred, for all her tone of humor, looked weary and discouraged-yes, and reckless.

"What you need, Mildred, is a good long rest."

"Clara, I do—a rest and then a good That would make me over."

Clara leaned suddenly forward.

"Well, a rest is what you are going to have. My whole business in town is to take you out home with me."

Mildred shook her head.

"But you must; I need you."

"I'm sorry, dear, but I can't."

"Why not?"

"The same old reason."

"Mrs. Dean?"

"Yes."

"See here, Mildred, you've always refused to come out to Norton, and Mrs. Dean has always been the reason. What's back of that? I need you now, and I'm not going to be satisfied with a plain unexplained 'no.'"

Mildred was silently thoughtful a

moment.

"I've never told you, because it's the sort of thing one doesn't like to speak about," she said slowly. "But I suppose there is really no reason why you shouldn't know. To begin with, then, Mrs. Dean is a sort of relative-"

"A relative!" cried Clara.

"Yes, and about the only one I've got. But very distant—a second or third cousin of my father. When father first got entangled in his money matters, and before the exposure came—he was really innocent, Clara, and was only technically guilty-he went to Mrs. Dean and begged the loan of money to tide him over. Fifty thousand would have saved his fortune and his name. But she had made a fine marriage, and she was afraid she might become involved in a possible scandal, so she refused. Then I went to her Madison Avenue house and begged to see her. She would not even come down. I never saw her before that time, I've never seen her since, and I never want to see her."

Clara's eyes glistened.

"Wouldn't you like to get even?"
Mildred's face hardened a little with reminiscence.

"I'm human, Clara,"

"Of course you do. And I'm going to help you—but most of all you're going to help me. Listen to the fix I'm in." And she told of her engagement to Philip Dean, and the scene of that morning with his mother. "Now it's up to you, Mildred, to help me bring her round!"

"Me? How?"

Clara's dark eyes were now ablaze. "Well, you know what an awful snob she is."

"I know she's got a geode or a lump of granite where the physiology books say

a heart is beating.

"It's the snob side we've got to work on. The thing that she's proudest of is, one of her ancestors—her husband's ancestors—signed the Declaration of Independence—but how she does love the European aristocrat! Wouldn't that make a lemon laugh?"

Clara gazed at her friend tensely a moment, then spoke with abrupt ex-

citement.

"Mill, the way you can wear clothes! In that mole-colored thing this afternoon, you looked as though your blood flowed straight down from Charlemagne!"

"Come—what's in your mind, Clara?"
"I suppose you've read about the

Countess D'Autreval?"

"Yes."

"And how she's off hiding some place, under an assumed name?"

"Ves."

"And did you notice that none of the pictures of her in the papers showed her face clearly? Her veil was half down when the cameras snapped her."

"Yes, but I don't see what that has

to do-"

"Here's what it has to do!" Clara's dark eyes were blazing into Mildred's; she spoke slowly. "In a day or two it will begin to be whispered about Norton that the mysterious elegant lady visiting me is the Countess D'Autreval."

Mildred's lips fell apart. "You mean that I—"

"That you are to be the Countess."

"Clara Raymond!"

"And when it gets about that the Countess is with me," Clara went on excitedly, "how the aristocrats of our exclusive little Norton will fall over themselves to take you to their hearts!"

Mildred got back her breath.

"But, Clara, I can't go down there

and claim to be the Countess!"

"And I don't want you to claim it. I want you to deny it. You are to tell the plain truth—or part of it. You are to claim that you are—what is the name you've been using at Weber & Mikelham's?—oh, yes, you are to claim, and so am I, that you are Gertrude Quayle. Only"—and Clara smiled sweetly—"our Norton aristocrats will not believe us. They'll know you are the Countess, and that 'Gertrude Quayle' is just your assumed name."

Mildred's eyes had begun to glow with amusement at Clara's audacious plan.

"But Mrs. Dean?" she queried.
"How is this beautiful dream of yours going to help you out with her?"

"She is to be the one that first suspects that my mysterious, retiring guest is the Countess; I'll see that she gets the proper tip. Then she'll descend upon you—take you up—show you about everywhere. I shall not introduce you to anyone, except as Gertrude Quayle. But Mrs. Dean will make a great hullabaloo over you, will make social capital of you; and then at the proper time I

shall tell her privately and prove to her just who you are. After which I shall threaten to expose her unless she removes the ban against Philip and me. She'll do anything rather than have it known that the Countess she has swallowed whole and paraded about is Gertie the Beautiful Cloak Model. See the game?"

Mildred nodded.

"Of course it's using you pretty rotten, I know; but you're a regular sport,

and you won't mind, will you?"

"Why should I—at least as far as that point is concerned? I'm nobody, and have nothing to lose. I feel that I owe Mrs. Dean something, and I certainly would like to pay the debt. But will it work, my dear child? Think of the difficulties!"

"What difficulties?"

"Well, there's the Countess herself. If two Countesses D'Autreval should—"

"Oh, bother, Mill! Haven't you got it into your head yet that the Countess has dived completely out of sight?"

"But suppose when she comes back to

the surface she hears about this?"

"How can she possibly hear when we're going to do the thing so very quietly? And, if she did, what could she possibly do? What could anybody do? And what difference would it make to us even if they did it? For we've never pretended that you were anybody but Gertrude Quayle."

"But suppose someone who knows the real Countess should happen to see me?

Can you hear the explosion?"

"One answer to that is that the Countess knows very few people in America. She said so in an interview when she landed. No danger there."

"But how'll you explain that the Countess happens to be visiting

vou?"

"I'll not explain. I'll leave people to infer that we became good friends while I was in France last spring. Now please but me no more buts."

"I'll have to, for there's another but or two. There's the talk. I can do a fair French dialect, but to keep that stunt up day after day—" "You won't have to. The papers say that the Countess speaks perfect English"

"Well, then, there's the clothes. For my whole outfit a pawnbroker wouldn't give me one of the gilded balls over his

door."

"Don't worry about the clothes. You and I walked out of the same mold. I brought about 'steen trunkfuls of clothes from Paris—lordy, how they did rob me on the duty!—and I've got a dozen gowns and plenty of folderols I've never had on. No one has ever seen them except my maid, and I telegraphed my housekeeper to discharge her and get her out of the house today. And this afternoon I engaged a maid for each of us—both to show up tomorrow morning. Oh, everything's thought of! And now isn't it a great old scheme?" she cried. "Isn't it just perfect?"

To Mildred, weary, a bit reckless, by nature ever ready for daring fun, it did in this moment of excitement seem an

almost perfect plan.

"Of course there may be a few little rough places," Clara ran on, "but we'll work them out as they come up. Besides, they'll add to the excitement of the thing. Now, you'll come in on it, won't you, Millie dear? Remember," she urged, "you'll be helping me, you'll be getting even with Mrs. Dean, you'll be getting a rest, and then think of what a lark it will be!"

Mildred's eyes were leaping with fun;

she emitted a joyous little laugh.

"Clara, you're a wild rattlebrain—but it certainly will be one gorgeous lark to grand - dame it among those grand dames!"

"Won't it! And, Millie, you'll do the incognita Countess to perfection! You'll

come? You must!"

"Yes, I'll come. But, child, if there's

any trouble-"

"There'll be no trouble. Oh, Millie, you're a darling!" And Clara sprang up and embraced her friend ecstatically.

"We're going to have the time of our sweet young lives!" She glanced at her watch. "But we must be making for the train—Countess D'Autreval."

IV

But when they were out of Blakeley's and in a taxi, it occurred to this pair of joyous conspirators—to Mildred, to be exact—that she could not appear upon the Norton stage with no more baggage than the gray suit in which she stood.

"And I've got nothing but a very battered and very obviously theatrical

trunk," she confessed.

"That's all right. I've a trunk store in the cellar of my town house," said Clara, and gave the chauffeur a number in the sixties. "I can fit you out with enough trunks to make it look as if you had brought along half the shops of Paris."

The spirit of the adventure had now got into Mildred's blood, and she it was that now was taking the lead. "But to carry out my incognita I should not have too many. I should say that the Countess might be making her unobtrusive travels with about two."

"Two it shall be then."

Clara let herself into her silent house with her latchkey; twenty minutes later the laughing schemers had dragged from the cellar two foreign made leather trunks covered with European hotel labels, but lacking Clara's name, and had jammed them full of Clara's winter clothing; they put the trunks on top of a cab, which had been telephoned for in advance, and started for the station, and two hours later a cabman, urged to be soft-footed, deposited the trunks in the bedroom of the best guest suite in Clara's house at Norton.

When the sound of the cab wheels had died away in the dark the two stood breathless, their hearing sharpened to its keenest edge. But the slumberous silence of the house was broken only by the monotonous shrilling of the treetoads that floated plaintively in from

the elms.

They unlocked the trunks and carried the winter garments on breathless, fearful tiptoe across to Clara's quarters, and returned with armloads of fluffy miraculous treasures of silk and finest linen. These they carefully packed into the trunks, for Mildred's maid to unpack and put into the drawers on the mor-

"And now one other thing," said Clara. She seated herself at Mildred's writing desk and scribbled for a few moments. Then she handed Mildred the following composition:

My DEAR MRS. DEAN:

I have been thinking a great deal over what passed between us this morning on your veranda. I am writing this to assure you that, whatever my feelings toward Philip may be, I shall do nothing whatever without your fullest consent. If after further consideration you adhere to your present attitude, that ends the matter. But in the meantime I sincerely trust that you will not allow what has happened to interrupt our friendly relations.

Sincerely,

CLARA RAYMOND.

"That's to put her in a good humor, so she'll have no reason for keeping away from us," explained Clara. "I'll send it over first thing in the morning." She licked the flap and drove it to place with a vicious blow of a soft fist. "The old thing!"

The next morning Mildred appeared in a simple white frock, for the designing of the like of which some elegant gentleman near the Rue de la Paix had a prince's income. Her soft, sheeny brown hair was done in a coiffure distinctly

French

"Why, Mildred," gasped Clara. "I didn't know you were such a stunner!"

"Oh, Clara, such duds as you have put me into!" moaned Mildred in ecstasy. "I didn't dream there were such things this side of Heaven!"

"Well, you look a countess, if there

ever was one!"

"I'm doing my best, dearie."

She had a "try-out" before a gentleman of formidable propriety who served their breakfast out in the barred sunlight of the pergola—said gentleman being an importation who, Clara whispered, had "once majordomoed for an Italian prince." Before this connoisseur of aristocracy Mildred more than made good. "Did you see how your fine air caught his eye?" Clara whispered toward the end of the meal. "I've never had any such deference from him."

They motored to the beach at eleven, which was Norton's hour for showing

its delicate-hued bathing suits at the water's edge and its fashionable toilettes farther up upon the sand. Clara's car ran slowly along to the shoreward of the promenaders, Mildred leaning back with a languid, elegant, brilliant-eyed curiosity. They had not moved a hundred yards before they were aware that scores were glancing covertly at Clara's guest.

"You're making a sensation," whispered Clara. "I knew you would!"

They trundled up and down the beach two or three times, Clara exchanging nods with acquaintances, then came to a pause a dozen vards from Mrs. Dean's motor. Friends began to saunter up to their car. First came Philip Dean, and to him Clara introduced her old school friend, Gertrude Quayle. In a moment Mildred was chatting with a dozen, and she did her best imitation of a grand lady who is trying to pass incognita, and who is not quite able to keep her grandness from filtering through her manner. Mildred tingled with histrionic pleasure; up to the present, this was the best piece of acting she had achieved. She was strikingly handsome, and knew it; she affected a lively, yet languid and pleasantly cynical manner that she felt, from her own delicious nerve responses, was proving a success of charm; and she put the least little bit of something into her air and speech that was not quite American and yet that one could hardly call un-American.

"She's a winner," Philip whispered to

Clara. "Who is she?"

"I told you—an old friend."

"Why, she's got the manner of—"
Just then Clara caught the eye of Mrs.
Dean, and the two exchanged nods.
Clara slipped from her seat and crossed to Mrs. Dean's car.

"You got my note this morning?"

"Yes; and it's a relief to me that you take the attitude you have," said Mrs. Dean.

"I don't believe in opposing the wishes of parents in such matters."

Mrs. Dean hardly heard this guileless remark; her eyes had turned to Clara's car.

"By the way," Mrs. Dean remarked,

trying to seem casual, "who's your guest?"

"Gertrude Quayle, an old friend."
"She looks rather foreign. She isn't,

is she?"

"Oh, no," said Clara hastily, and with just a touch of embarrassment. "She's American."

"When did she arrive?"

"Last night-very suddenly."

Mrs. Dean watched Mildred for a moment.

"I must say she has a very distin-

guished manner."

"She is a very—" Clara checked herself as though she had come near stumbling into an indiscretion, and flushed. "She is very charming," she corrected lamely.

Mrs. Dean shot her a sharp look. Clara flushed with a deeper embarrass-

ment

"H'm—perhaps you would like to bring her over to meet me," suggested Mrs. Dean.

"I would, but I can't very well get her away from all those people. But

can't you come over for tea?"

Mrs. Dean considered, then announced that she could. Five minutes later Clara was back in her car speeding homeward, and was whispering with suppressed glee of the engagement with Mrs. Dean.

"And every person back there," she continued, "is talking about my piquant, charming, distinguished and rather mysterious guest. Mildred, up with the curtain; the play is on!"

Mrs. Dean appeared that afternoon at four. Mildred had never before met the woman who she believed could have saved her father's life and name—who had refused her even the common courtesy of receiving her; and she felt the old anger rise at sight of the proud, handsome, domineering face, and she felt like refusing the hand which Mrs. Dean held out. But she restrained herself; she recalled that this was comedy she was playing, not tragedy. She took the hand, and became the Countess incognita.

The trio chatted the usual nothings over their tea, which was served out on the porch by the ex-butler of the Italian prince. Mildred, stimulated by the lark of the thing, by her desire to help her friend, and more than a little by the ancient grudge she bore this arrogant dame, played her role for every value in it. She could see that Mrs. Dean was impressed with-well, with her distinguished quality. Little foreignisms escaped her-intonations, gestures, the lift of the shoulders; and once while addressing Clara she apparently forgot herself and lapsed into French, and then apologized with a confusion which she tried to cover-all of which suspicious details were caught by the alert attention of Mrs. Dean.

Tea over, Mildred was crossing the veranda at the request of Clara, to admire a view of the distant burnished Sound, when she tore one of the sweeping flounces of her skirt—or said she did. She retired to be repaired by her maid, laying her mother-of-pearl fan on the

tea table.

"I must say, Clara," remarked Mrs. "that your friend is one of the most distinguished-looking, distinguished-mannered young women I have ever met. Who did you say she was?"

"An old friend."

"Really, you should have had her at Norton before. Quayle—Quayle," she said reflectively; "I don't recall any well known families of that name, and yet apparently she is of the very best Her next words she shot at Clara suddenly, sharply: "You're sure she is an American?"

"Oh, yes—yes," fluttered Clara, and hastily excused herself to see if she could be of service to her guest. Her sudden leaving had the appearance of flight.

Mildred was the first to come down. She paused a moment in the hall and gazed with excited expectancy out upon the veranda, for their little scheme had thus far worked out just as had been planned. Sure enough, there was Mrs. Dean, standing beside the tea table, the mother-of-pearl fan in her hands, staring at its intricately engraved sticks. Her lips were parted and she was breathing sharply.

At the sound of Mildred's step she

quickly laid down the fan and turned to her. Her proud cheeks were flushed and there was a strange, excited light in her

"Aren't skirts the clumsiest things?" remarked Mildred casually, as she swept "I'm in favor of dress reformharem skirt, Turkish trousers, anything. Aren't you?"

Ordinarily Mrs. Dean would have some sharp rebuke for this sartorial heresy. But she seemed not to hear, and for the moment she stood stock still, staring at Mildred. So engrossed were they both in their separate ideas that neither of them noticed that the Italian butler had come upon the porch by a side door, and was silently clearing the serving table.

"Miss Quayle—Miss Quayle," Mrs.

Dean quavered out at length.

"Yes?"

She crossed to Mildred, excited deference in her manner.

"I am proud to know you—proud!"

she whispered.

Mildred looked blank. "Thank you.

but I do not understand."

"I am proud"—Mrs. Dean took a step nearer, and the light in her eyes grew brighter-"I am proud-Countess D'Autreval!"

"Countess D'Autreval!" exclaimed

The butler, at the far side of the porch, turned at the sound of the distinguished name, stared an instant, then noiselessly withdrew.

Mildred had the trick of turning pale at will, and she made use of the device. She started, and for a moment her man-

ner was all confusion.

"I-I-Mrs. Dean-" She had now partially recovered her composure. "You are quite mistaken, Mrs. Dean. I am Gertrude Quayle."

But the instant of cleverly acted confusion had made Mrs. Dean quite cer-

"Countess, I assure you your secret-"

"But, Mrs. Dean, I am not the Countess." Mildred turned for help to Clara, who had come out the moment before. "Clara, please help me set Mrs. Dean right."

"I do not see how you could have made such a mistake." said Clara. "Miss Quayle is an American, an old school friend of mine."

"There!" cried Mildred. Mrs. Dean nodded.

"Of course you must keep up the pretense. But you need not with me-you can trust me."

"But, I assure you, you are wrong, Mrs. Dean," said Mildred, now with the composed, easy manner that plainly proclaimed her of the best blood of France. "I do not see how you could have imagined such a thing.

Mrs. Dean was extremely courteous, but firm; the glow of triumph was in her

"Pardon me if I seem unduly insistent. Clara, you spent most of the winter and spring in France. Could you not then have become friendly-intimatewith the Countess D'Autreval? Now the Countess is in America, incognita. You both admit that?"

"I admit that I have read it in the papers," smiled Mildred. "But that does not prove that the Countess is

here."

"Must I prove it?" said Mrs. Dean. She picked up the fan from the tea table. "I merely took this up to examine the exquisite workmanship, and I found that!"

She pointed triumphantly to a spot on the side of the fan. There, plainly enough, was the name "Clarice D'Autreval"-which the clever fingers of Clara had that afternoon cut into the mother-of-pearl.

Mildred snatched the fan in a flurry. "I—I—oh, Mrs. Dean—" She sank

dismayed into a chair.

"Please don't be disturbed, Countess," begged Mrs. Dean. "Your secret is safe with me."

"Oh!" gasped Clara.
"Oh!" gasped Mildred. Then she struggled to her feet, and seemed to be seizing desperately at her self-control. "That—that fan is not really mine. It belonged to a friend—and was given me. I-I assure you that I am not the

But this dismayed disclaimer could

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not deceive the sharp eyes of the social autocrat of Norton. She smiled indulgently.

"There, there—worry no more about

"But I insist, Mrs. Dean—"
"And so do I," put in Clara.

Mrs. Dean smiled. "Very well. But. Countess-I beg your pardon; Miss Quayle-I hope you and Mrs. Raymond can dine with me tonight. I am going to have a few of the best people of Norton."

They accepted. When Mrs. Dean departed, Clara led Mildred into the library, closed the door and ecstatically threw her arms about her.

"She swallowed the whole thing, Millie!" she cried. "Oh, it's going to be gorgeous! Gorgeous!"

"Did I do my part well?" sparkled

Mildred.

"You acted the unmasked and dis-

concerted Countess like a star!"

Mildred laughed with the tingling fun of the thing. But deeper than and behind her exultant amusement there rose a workaday thought and yearning. Huxheim had said she could not act. Huxheim had only seen her now!

MILDRED and Clara remained in the library for an hour or more exulting over their success. Then Philip Dean was announced, and they received him out upon the veranda. Mildred examined more closely than in the morning the man whom she was helping to win for her friend. She was predisposed against him on the score that he was his mother's son. Moreover, he was, as she understood, a mere social ornament, who elegantly idled away his time and spent lavish sums earned for him by sweating, half starving hordes of whose existence and of whose manner of toil he was pleasantly ignorant; and for the man that did not work and had no purpose, the hard working Mildred had a deep, instinctive contempt. But as they chatted on she had to admit grudgingly that, for his class, Philip Dean seemed a very fair

specimen—clean-muscled, clever and with some sort of under-stratum of seri-

Presently there came an interruption to their conversation. A broad, solidly built but not fleshy man of perhaps thirty-five walked from around the corner of the house and toward the porch. At sight of him Clara rose, her face paled somewhat, and she stared at him with twitching nostrils.

He paused at the steps and stared up

"Good afternoon, Mr. Raymond," said Clara frigidly.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Raymond,"

he returned pleasantly.

Mildred understood: ex-husband and

ex-wife.

"May I inquire," continued Clara in her most distant tone, "to what I am

indebted for this pleasure?"

"Certainly. You will recall that I have never removed my papers and drawings from my study-my former study, I mean. I have come to ask your permission to clear them out."

"How long will it take?"

"To remove things without getting them in disorder—several days."

"Several days? Where do you expect to stay?"

"I am at the Norton Inn."

Clara hesitated. "Very well," she said

finally.

"Thanks." He came amiably up the steps. "Your kindness tempts me to go a little farther. I have a client who wishes plans for a new theater drawn up without a day's unnecessary delay. The notes and sketches I must consult and show him are all here. To remove these and set them in working order elsewhere would mean the loss of days. My second request is this: to save time, may I bring my client here and go over the sketches with him?"

"I have no wish to interfere with your business," she said frigidly. "You have

my permission."

"You are very kind." He now took notice of the others. "Hello, Phil," said

"Hello, Jack," said young Dean, decidedly embarrassed.

But Jack Raymond shook his successor's hand as if nothing had come to pass to interrupt their old time friendship. Clara stiffly introduced Mildred as "Miss Quayle, an old friend who is visiting me," after which Mildred, deeming it discreet to escape from this awkward situation, slipped into the living room and took refuge in a recessed window. A moment later young Dean entered, and uneasily walked up and down the room.

Outside, Clara had reseated herself. "Well," she said sharply, "have you married that Miss Trixie yet?"

"Not yet," he said amiably. see, having been abroad, there's hardly been a chance for it yet."

She gave a sarcastic exclamation.

"And you? When are you going to marry Phil? For I understand you are." Clara flushed.

"Will you please keep out of my af-

"Well, you'll at least allow me to congratulate you, Clara," he continued pleasantly. "Phil will make you a lot better husband than I ever did."

"You'd better get in there to your papers. And you'll oblige me by getting

through as soon as possible."

"I'll do my best, Clara," he said, ris-

"You'll please not 'Clara' me!" "See here," he went on in his pleasant, unruffled tone, "I don't see, just because we've been married once, that that's any reason why we shouldn't be friends. You're a nice, likable person, even if you are a bit highly seasoned with temper, and you know I'm not such a bad sort, after all."

"Why, you audacious—"

He walked away, leaving Clara gasping, and entered the sitting room. Mildred saw him slip his arm through that of young Dean.

"Congratulations, Phil, about you and Clara," he said heartily. "Come out into the study and let's talk it over. Clara's all right, but she needs handling, and I think I can give you some points.'

When they had passed into the study, Mildred slipped back to the veranda. Clara's face was wrinkled with anger.

"Think of his showing up at such a time!" she exclaimed. "Did you ever

hear of such nerve?"

Mildred did not answer. She was disturbed by something other than this contretemps in the heart affairs of her friend.

"Clara, are you sure you never showed your hus—Mr. Raymond—my picture?" she whispered.

"How could I, when you never sent

me one?"

"Then you think there's no chance of his finding out who I really am?"

Clara sat suddenly upright.

"I hadn't thought of that!" Her former look of provocation changed to dismay. "Jack's very clever. With him snooping around the house for days, as he's going to do, he's likely to find out anything!"

"That's what I was thinking of," said

Mildred.

"And if he found out, he'd be just

mean enough-"

She did not complete the exclamation; but sat staring at Mildred with growing consternation. This was the first serious suggestion that the beautiful three-act comedy they had planned might not work out as per scenario. Suppose, after all, the play were to take an unexpected twist, and the final curtain should descend, not upon Mrs. Dean as the butt of the piece, but on their own sweet selves!

"If he found out, would he tell?"

asked Mildred.

"Tell! Isn't he looking for a chance to even up things with me? Could anything more awful have happened?"

It seemed not. But just then Clara's chargé d'affaires, the ex-majordomo of the Italian nobleman, stepped out upon the veranda. In his hands was a little tray on which rested a bit of pasteboard. This he presented to Mildred with a bow of deepest deference.

"'Mr. Cartwright Dexter, New York Record," Mildred read. Then, puzzled, she asked the butler: "What does he

want?"

"He desires," said the velvet-voiced functionary, "to see the Countess D'Autreval."

"The Countess D'Autreval!" gasped Mildred.

"The Countess D'Autreval!" gasped

Clara.

Mildred was the first to come back to life; but it was Clara's duty to conduct negotiations through her servants, and presently Clara regained a little of her breath.

"Tell him that—that I'm not at home," she gasped. "And that I know nothing at all about the Countess D'Au-

treval."

There was a hint of unbelief in the lofty menial's eyes, but he made a slight inclination to Clara and one of deeper reverence to Mildred, and departed wordlessly upon his embassy.

The consternation over Jack Raymond's arrival was but bland indifference compared to their present dismay.

Clara clutched Mildred's arm.

"We—we forgot to take into consideration that, if they heard of it, the papers would—would make a lot about the reappearance of the Countess—"

"I wonder what else we've forgotten?" exclaimed Mildred in a tragic-

humorous voice.

"But how could they ever have found

out about you so soon?"

Neither had even a guess. The mystery might have been a little clearer to them had they known that the steward at the Norton Inn made a comfortable addition to his income by being in the secret employ of the Record, his duty being to telephone in tips of scandals and unscheduled social events concerning the exclusive set of Norton; and said steward had suborned with a share in the receipts of whatever they brought him servants in almost every establishment of the place. And the mystery would have been completely cleared up had they seen Clara's pearl-beyondprice of a butler, a moment after he had overheard Mrs. Dean address Mildred as the Countess, go scuttling furtively toward the Norton Inn.

"Thank heaven we've got rid of that reporter!" cried Clara. "But there'll be more reporters. Quick, how are we going

to head them off?"

"No use worrving about the next re-

porter," said Mildred. "If this one is up to the standard we're not through with

him yet."

And they were not. For just then a fresh-looking young man with a pair of guileless eyes walked through the doorway out upon the veranda and straight up to Mildred, before whom he bowed.

"Pardon my intrusion, Countess," he said easily in French. "But it is the fault of our readers. They demand intimate views of celebrities who visit us, and that forces us poor newspaper men into a seeming lack of delicacy."

Mildred had regained control of her-

self.

"You need not speak French, though I understand it," she replied in English. "You are laboring under a profound misapprehension. I am an American, and

my name is Gertrude Quayle."

"I understand—you are incognita, of course." Mr. Dexter smiled pleasantly. "But, Miss Quayle, would you mind telling me about your impressions of American society, and what you think of it compared with the best society of France?"

"I believe that my guest has already informed you," Clara put in with tremulous severity, "that you are making a

profound mistake."

The guileless young gentleman bowed

courteously.

"Miss Quayle, if you could give me an idea of the points you expect to dwell upon in your book—"

"I am writing no book, and never expect to write a book," Mildred inter-

rupted.

"Then you will not tell me—"

"I can tell you nothing."

"Ah, pardon me—but I have brought a friend of mine along. If you will permit him to take your photograph—"

"Certainly not! I am not the Countess D'Autreval. What is more, I have never seen her. And now I trust you will excuse me."

"Certainly-certainly."

Mr. Dexter appeared slightly confused by Mildred's abrupt dismissal, and he glanced down on the table at an exquisite mother-of-pearl fan that he had

been fingering. He looked up with a respectful, apologetic face.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Raymond—Miss Quayle." And bowing, he with-

"Thank heaven, we pulled through that all right!" cried Clara.

"I'm not so sure that we did."

"You think he perhaps saw through us? He didn't act like it."

"There's no telling, from the way a reporter acts, what he saw."

"But if he prints it—" began Clara.
Suddenly the same thought froze them

"And if the real Countess should see it," breathed Mildred, "and come tearing down here to Norton!"

'Oh, lordy!" groaned Clara.

Whereupon they both sank into chairs and gazed wildly at one another.

VI

The reporter saw through them all right, for Mr. Cartwright Dexter—known as "Stuffy" in Park Row—was one of the smoothest gentlemen who had ever sacrificed a diplomatic career to the trade of feeding New York its breakfast of news.

And he printed it, too, did Mr. Stuffy And since no billionaire had that week performed a philanthropic service to the newspaper by putting aside his wife in the divorce courts; since the members of Congress were back in their four hundred odd respective oblivions trying to square themselves for their past year's misdeeds; since the President was engaged in nothing more world-shaking than the clubbing of a seventy-five-cent sphere of rubber and gutta percha; since, in short, all the usual springs of news were suffering from the usual August drought, Dexter got in about four columns of his "beat." He told how beautiful was the Countess, how charming, how distinguished, how patently of the noblest noble blood; how she sought to maintain her incognita as Gertrude Quayle, and how his suspicion had been corroborated by the discovery of a mother-of-pearl fan with "Clarice D'Autreval" carved into it.

Also, Dexter added, the Countess had been the guest of honor at a distinguished dinner party given by Mrs. Sherman Dean.

It was the kind of story that the papers hunger for in the summer time. Beautiful woman—noble blood—social set of France—mysterious disappearance on a piquant errand—rediscovered trying to pass herself off as an American girl; what more could mortal editor desire?

To get this part of this history out of the way and done with, it may be here recorded that the story was taken up by the afternoon papers—was taken up next day by the morning papers, which printed descriptions of the Countess and alleged interviews with her—was taken up by all the thousand papers of this our great and glorious democracy. A delicious thrill ran down their columns over the beautiful Old World aristocrat.

But this is running far ahead and far

Early on the morning after the visit of Mr. Cartwright Dexter, Clara slipped across to Mildred's suite, for they had decided to breakfast upstairs where they could examine the newspapers in private. When the papers were brought up, and they saw the work of that virtuoso of the typewriter, Mr. Dexter, they almost passed from this incarnation into the next.

Mildred was the first to gasp her way back from the Great Beyond. She declared that she was going to pack at once, and fly to the obscurity of a New York boarding house. For the Countess D'Autreval was going to see this, surely—and then, what an explosion!

Against this decision Clara protested. It was good enough for Mildred to run away—but how about herself? Was she to be left to sit upon the explosion alone? No, indeed—she wasn't going to have that! They could get out of it better if they both faced it together. Besides, Mildred really had nothing to lose. And besides—this came to Clara as an inspiration—and besides, perhaps the real Countess had so completely buried herself that she would never see or hear of this story.

Clara protested and begged, and in the end Mildred yielded. She would stick it out, and trust to luck to get through the business somehow. But one thing was plain: after this publicity, it would be useless to deny that she was the Countess D'Autreval.

They hung back from the ordeal of going downstairs and facing the beginning of this new situation. There was Jack Raymond, ex-master of this house, now in the study below; and with him, so they surmised from a vague second voice that ascended to them, was the client who desired rush plans for a new theater. Both had of course seen Stuffy Dexter's masterpiece in the *Record*.

But at length a maid appeared and announced that Mrs. Dean had called.

"We're in for it now!" groaned Clara.
"Be a sport, Clara." Mildred surveyed herself before the full length mirror. "Well, here goes for the best French Countess that ever came from Tuscarawas County, Ohio. Come on."

Mrs. Dean's stately countenance was illumined with its most gracious smile.

"Good morning, my dear Countess. I motored over to see if you had not been wearied too much at dinner last night."

The Countess had not.

"Have you seen this morning's Record?" Mrs. Dean continued in a low, excited voice. "Your secret is out. But I hope it will not interfere with your plans."

"I hope not," sighed the pseudo-Countess.

Mrs. Dean was plainly exultant over the social victory she had won in being the first who had, so to say, publicly entertained the Countess; and she was running on, suggesting new entertainments at which she would be the hostess, in order to monopolize and secure to herself this social lioness—when the study door opened and Jack Raymond came in.

"Excuse me for interrupting, but I heard your voice. Clar—Mrs. Raymond, I mean—why didn't you tell us yesterday that Miss Quayle was in reality the Countess D'Autreval, and not leave us to learn it from a newspaper?"

"Mrs. Raymond knew my wish to

remain incognita," said Mildred tranquilly.

His admiration was evident.

"I was not any the less pleased to meet Miss Quayle than I am now to meet the Countess D'Autreval," he said. "Butyou have certainly given us a surprise!"

Mildred replied with an arch French

smile and a very French shrug.

"If you will allow me," continued Jack, "I should like to introduce my client. He has been asking the favor all morning."

"Certainly."

Jack stepped to the study door and called: "Come in, Huxheim."

Luckily Mrs. Dean had turned to a

table for her handkerchief.

"Huxheim!" gasped Mildred, seizing Clara's arm. "Huxheim! Where can I

But she had no time to run, for the stocky figure of the great manager stepped into the room. Mildred turned her back and moved a pace away, and thus forced the manager to be introduced first to Clara and Mrs. Dean, the latter recognizing his existence with just the slightest nod.

During the instant thus gained Mildred caught wildly at her courage and

control.

"Countess," said Jack's voice, "permit me to introduce to you Mr. Huxheim."

She turned. Huxheim stopped abruptly in a very profound bow he was making and stared at her.

"I am very pleased to meet Mr. Huxheim," she said with the most countess-

like manner in her repertory.

"And I—I—" He kept staring at her "The pleasure is entirely mine, face. Countess."

She inclined her head with the ultimate perfection of gracious condescension. She wanted to sweep grandly away, but with that look of half-recognition in Huxheim's little gray eyes she knew she had to stay and try to bluff it out.

Sam Huxheim, theatrical dictator and ex-prizefight magnate, was not yet a polished drawing room product; but he had nerve, else he would never have

fought his way from race track tout up to the top of the artistic heap. His nerve did not now desert him.

"Excuse me, Madame the Countess" —so the phrase had run in one of his plays adapted from the French—"excuse me, but have I not seen you before?"

To Mildred his little gray eyes seemed to bore into her. She smiled straight back into those eyes—with a heart in her that pounded madly.

"Have you been in France recently, Mr.—ah—" She hesitated with a note

of query in her voice.

"Mr. Huxheim," he supplied.

"You may have seen me there," she said carelessly—her manner that of a celebrity who is pointed out wherever she appears. "Or perhaps you may have seen my picture somewhere."

The puzzled look did not leave his

round, purplish face.

"Perhaps. But I have a very vague impression-" He tried to bend his middle part into a gallant bow of apology. "Pardon me that any impression of Madame the Countess should be vague—but I have an impression that I must have seen you recently."

"Two days ago!" thumped Mildred's heart. But her careless lips remarked:

"Perhaps it was merely someone that reminds you of me."

Mildred smiled her smile of gracious condescension, and looked the ancientblooded, magnificent creature that he

thought her.

While they spoke Huxheim had maneuvered her away from the others, for that pushing gentleman was not the one to lose his first opportunity for a têle-àtête with a real breathing woman of title—to which move Mildred had interposed no objection. Her blood was suddenly afire with an exultant daring. Two days before this man had said she could not act. Well— She drew a deep breath.

"Is Mr. Huxheim, like Mr. Raymond, also an architect?" she inquired casu-

The great man looked taken aback.

"I am a theatrical manager."

"Oh!"

"You probably have heard of me. Huxheim—Samuel Huxheim."

Her face wrinkled with thought.

"Huxheim? Huxheim?" It was a world encircling name—but the noble head slowly shook.

"Indeed! Perhaps madame is not in-

terested in the theater."

"More so than in anything else."

"I think madame herself might make a splendid actress—if she chose," he said.

Was it only two days ago that he had said she could never act? What a help are a title and a high place!

"What makes you think I could act?"

she queried.

"To answer that I must speak so plainly that I may offend madame. You have beauty, distinguished manner, charm. The hardest thing to get is an actress that can act a real lady; you would do that as a matter of course."

"Indeed!" said Mildred, with an aris-

tocratic drawl.

"I hope I have not offended you," he put in hastily.

"No. I am merely a little surprised to

hear you say so."

"Surprised! How could madame be surprised over a statement of the obvious?"

"Suppose I should come to you and

ask you for a part?"

"I would give it to you gladly," he said eagerly.

Would he?

"If Madame the Countess is really interested in the theater," Huxheim went on, making the most of his opening, "perhaps she would like to see a rehearsal."

"Rehearsal! Where?" she inquired

languidly.

"I have a country place five miles from here, and have just brought a company down and am rehearsing a new piece in my barn. I'm doing it so that I can get as much of the country as I can before I'm plunged into the rush of fall production. This is the first piece I put on."

"What is it?" queried Mildred with a sudden but repressed excitement.

"'The Golden Spoon.'"

"Oh!" She could not help the exclamation.

The others were coming out upon the veranda. "Would madame and her friends care to motor over?" he asked.

She, one of the most obscure of his thousand slaves, smiled with languid condescension into her master's eager face.

"It might amuse one for an after-

noon."

"Then I shall expect madame," he breathed, open admiration in his little

eyes.

Here they were interrupted by the others, and a few minutes later the great and only Huxheim returned with Jack to the plans of the new theater. Mildred was tingling with a wild excitement. Perhaps it might prove a great lark, after all!

VII

YES, it might prove a great lark!

Mrs. Dean carried Clara and Mildred off in her car to the social function at the beach. Here there was an informal but rather ceremonious reception, all the great society folk crowding up to be introduced. Such courtesy! Such deference! They were all upon their superfine behavior, for they knew not just which of them were going to brighten the chapters of the fascinating Countess.

Mrs. Dean was at the height of her glory in stage-managing her splendid protegé, whom she had with a calm superiority stolen from Clara; she glowed with the Countess's reflected radiance. As for Mildred, she smiled and chatted and nodded, and leaned back in the charming lassitude of the French aris-

tocrat.

Inwardly she was bubbling with mirth—mirth that was rather satirical. She was seeing what a good stage scene it would make if these people, so eager to meet her, were suddenly to discover that she was Mildred Grantley, struggling actress. How they would vanish!

Mrs. Dean carried her and Clara away to lunch and kept them for the afternoon—adding huge sums to her social capital. Mildred and Clara had accepted a dinner invitation, and were home only long enough to dress, at which time they were informed there had been innumerable calls for the Countess—and so it happened that it was not till the next morning, when they breakfasted together in Mildred's suite, that they discovered the full magnitude of the figure that Mildred had become.

First, there were newspapers. dred gasped when she saw the attention given her by them all. And then what a stack of letters! On the thickest, whitest, most expensive paper! Invitations, all of them, from some of the greatest social names of the East, begging the Countess to honor them with at least a few days' visit during her stay in Amer-As she opened these aristocratic sheets Mildred read them aloud to Clara. At first she read with hilarity, but then after millionairess millionairess pressed her hospitality upon her, Mildred became dazed, and paused and stared at her friend.

"Goodness, Clara, where and how is this business ever going to end?"

"Why should you want it to end?"

"It's going to end, whether I want it to or not. Besides, if it doesn't end itself, I've got to end it, for remember, my dear, this pampered pet of the courts of Europe sitting before you has got a living to make, and has got to get busy trying to make it."

"Bother!" said Clara.

Mildred gazed with appalled humor at the heap of invitations she had al-

ready opened.

"Clara, it's a thousand to one that I don't get a chance to end this thing myself. I can't help wondering how it's all coming out. But one thing's certain—there's going to be an explosion." Then she added suddenly: "Funny that we haven't heard from the real Countess!"

"See here, you said you were going to

forget—"

"But I can't forget the Damoclean sword that I've managed to push my chair in under. Just suppose the Countess were to walk in upon the stage of Norton today—as she may do!"

"Oh, bother! Let's have the fun of

the thing while it lasts."

"I'm going to, my champion little intriguer." She patted the pile of invitations. "Thanks, Mrs. Van Millionaire; I wonder if you'll write as urgently a month from now, when I'm playing in 'The Broken Heart' out in Keokuk, Iowa?"

While she spoke she had torn open another envelope.

"Hello! What's this?" she cried.

"What's what?"

"Read this." She handed over the letter and Clara read:

DEAR CLARICE:

When you turned me down I suppose you thought you were done with me. Well, I guess you'll find you have another think coming.

Yours, WENDELL GILMORE.

"Who is Wendell Gilmore, and what's he talking about?" cried Mildred blankly.

"I've heard of him. Philip Dean knows him. He must— I say, look at

the envelope."

Mildred did. It was addressed to the Countess D'Autreval at the Hotel Plaza, New York, and had been forwarded to Norton.

"It's intended for the real Countess," she said. "Well, I'll let her attend to her

own troubles."

There were several other letters, and among them were a number that were obviously personal to the real Countess —letters plainly written in response to communications mailed by the Countess before she left France. And weird letters they were, indeed—one from a meat packer's wife with social aspirations, who offered a large sum if the Countess would be her guest for a week; one from a big dressmaker, who offered her ten thousand dollars a year if she would allow him to advertise that his gowns were modeled upon patterns approved by her; and one from a very yellow newspaper tempting her with an attractive offer to do for them a spicy daily series under the head "Gay Life in European Courts," for which she need supply only the material and the signature—the actual writing would be done by one of the paper's star men.

"Say," gasped Mildred, "what kind

of a creature is this that I'm understudy for? What's she up to?"

Clara had no idea.

"Suppose—just suppose—that these people should all descend on me!"

They had no adequate opportunity to discuss this possibility. For an hour reporters for afternoon papers had been sending up their requests for interviews, and they could no longer be denied. Mildred descended to them, and since she felt that she was going to be hanged anyhow, she decided she would be hanged for a goat. And so she told the reporters what she thought of American society—what she thought of the way American women dressed—what she thought of American men-how the lovemaking of the American gentleman compared with that of his brother of France—and dismissed the joyous press servitors to hurry with their precious confections for the next New York train.

But Mildred was not through. Next was ushered in to her a fluttering bejeweled gentleman, who came from Adam via Abraham. François was his name. He was all bows, and all smiles of a radiance that would have made the annihilation of the sun a negligible event. He had come to see the Countess at the earliest moment he could find her, as the Countess had requested; and he was willing to stand upon the terms previously offered her—to wit, if she could give him the secret of the distinctive perfume which she used and which Paris talked so much about, and would allow him to use her name upon the bottles and the advertising matter, he would pay her a royalty of thirty percent on the gross receipts. Ah, he now detected upon the air that distinguished, delectable, delicate fragrance that everywhere accompanied her presence! She got rid of him, however, without injuring any negotiations the real Countess might have on with him.

She drew a deep breath and received the next one. He was a rather stately-looking male, obviously primped and polished to look a less worn piece of human goods than he actually was. In his filmy gray eye was a look that Mildred could hardly make out—a look that

suggested affection awaiting only the signal to reveal itself. His first words let Mildred know that he and she were merely resuming face to face a matter that had been in progress by means of correspondence. He was deferential, obsequious—and the tenderness began to break more and more through the film of his eyes. But Mildred was mystified as to his mission, and at length asked him point blank who he was.

"What, you have forgotten me?" he said reproachfully. "After having

written me this?"

She took the sheet of heavy note paper. It bore the D'Autreval crest, and the writing was in French, in a dashing hand. The note, with what Mildred read behind it, made all clear. The Countess had read the advertisement of a "gentleman in his prime, fine address, good appearance, wishing to correspond with irreproachable lady of means—object matrimony." And there it was in plain words—the Countess had written him to call.

Mildred got rid of him somehow, and sat gasping. In the name of mercy, what was the Countess up to? And what kind of a weird, wild creature was she?

Mildred was still groping blindly about in her brain when there entered a quick-eyed, sharp-featured, businesslooking young woman in a tailored linen "Jennie Marie Colfax" was the name on the card that had been sent in; and this information Miss Colfax added to by stating that she it was who did the big signed women's feature story on the third page of the Record. She was quick and to the point. She had come, as the Countess had requested in her note, to give the Countess the information she desired. She had delicious scandalous details without end about America's first families, which would add immensely to the piquancy of the Countess's forthcoming book; and, really, it was a very clever idea of the Countess, since the Countess's stay was so short, to arrange with an expert like herself to supply the spicy data.

Miss Jennie Marie Colfax was sent on her way with a non-committal answer. Mildred began at length to understand

-in part, at least. The Countess had had a plan all laid to secure as much material and as many out-of-the-ordinary adventures as she could in a brief timeand she, Mildred, had fallen heir to the whole outfit!

The Italian butler said that others waited, but Mildred gasped out that she could see no more and fled in panic out upon the veranda. Philip Dean rose and

flung away a cigarette.

"May I join you, Countess?" he asked, as she started down the steps.

She would rather have been alone for a few minutes to recover her mental balance, but she could hardly refuse him. Besides, she found herself rather liking Philip Dean, despite his mother, and despite his being one of the idlers whom for their idleness she supremely detested.

He noted her flushed face as they

went down the stone walk.

"Is anything wrong, Countess?"

"Anything!" She barely choked down a hysterical laugh. "A—a little."

"Anything serious?" he asked, with rather more anxiety than was necessary from a man engaged to another woman. "I—I hope not." In spite of it all,

there came a flicker of humor into her

"I'm glad to see you can smile," said

"Perhaps you would smile, too, if you

knew everything."

"Do you mind telling me what it's all about?"

He did not quite understand the side-

long smile she gave him.

"I rather think I do." She remembered to give her French shrug. "What a lot of queer, inquisitive people you have in America!"

"It is a shame the way this corner of the universe has been annoying you with its curiosity," he said sharply. "We shall take steps to see that you are not in-

truded upon again."

They had reached the hydrangea bushes at the lower end of the walk. At this moment, as if in defiance of Philip's declaration, a man stepped suddenly out from the shrubbery and stopped directly in front of them—a stocky man, with a diamond horseshoe in his necktie.

He lifted his hat. "I believe I heard you addressed as the Countess D'Autreval," he said.

"She is the Countess," said Philip, "What do frowning at the trespasser.

vou want?"

There was a flash of paper from the man's inside coat pocket. "I was requested to personally place this letter in the Countess's hand."

Mildred took the paper, and gave it a puzzled look. "What is it?" she asked

The man's face had suddenly become

illumined with a grin.

"I rather think you know, Countess." Philip gave a look at the paper, then a furious look at the man.

"Why, you're a process server!" "A process server!" exclaimed Mil-

dred.

"I rather guess I am," bowed the man. And then to Mildred, with a shrewd, complacent look: "You were too slick for me at the Plaza Wednesday night. But I got you at last."

"At the Plaza! Why—why—" She gave the paper to Philip. "What on

earth is this thing?"

He took the document. His face changed as he read. Then he slowly folded it up and gave her a grave, odd look.

"What is it?" she repeated.

"Only this—that a man named Wendell Gilmore has brought suit against you, asking fifty thousand dollars damages, for breach of promise."

VIII

It is an index to Mildred's vitality that she did not faint. But there was a lawn bench beside the walk, and perhaps she may be excused for having sunk very limply into its slatted embrace.

"I know that Wennie Gilmore!" she heard Philip growl. "He's a cad, and it's

an infernal shame!"

Dazed though she was, Mildred had one moment of grand illumination. She now understood the real reason that had prompted the disappearance of the Countess. The ingenuous and romantic

story about her desire to go about incognita in order to get intimate material and unposed-for pen pictures for her book—which story Clara and herself and the dear delighted public had swallowed without a question—that story was—well, just a dear, delightful story. The real reason for her disappearance was plainly that she had somehow got warning of Gilmore's purpose, and had fled to avoid the service of the papers.

And she, Mildred Grantley, of age and supposedly in her right mind, had blithely walked into the danger that the Countess had fled! And tomorrow it would all be in the papers! Wennie Gilmore's lawyers would see to that.

Again Mildred found herself mentally gasping as to what sort of a creature the Countess was. A freak of nature, who knew no law but the moment's whim? Undoubtedly. And she must be a terror and—

A new thought, a sharper fear, rather a certainty, shot through Mildred. If the Countess had become involved in as many wild escapades as had that day come to light, might there not be dozens more? And far, far worse?

And which would be the next of the Countess's escapades that would come home upon her hapless head to roost?

While her thoughts were wildly floundering about, Philip Dean had been inveighing against Gilmore, and she had been dropping in a monosyllable frequently enough to give evidence that she was still alive. Now she became aware that Philip, who had sat down at her side, the process server having disappeared the moment his duty was done, was regarding her with a very serious look.

"Countess," said he, "will you permit me to ask you a rather personal question?"

"Go on," said she.

"I know Gilmore. He's a cad, a pinhead, a pup. He manages to float around with the froth of society, though how he does it I don't know. He's been around Paris a lot. I suppose that's where you and he—where you met him."

"I suppose so."

"What I want to ask you, Countess,

is this: I know you don't care for him now—but what was it that you ever saw attractive in Wennie Gilmore?"

"What did I see—" She blinked her eyes and swallowed. "I—I—well, the fact is, I don't know myself now."

"I hope, Countess, you have not written him any—ah—any indiscreet letters? Anything compromising?"

"I am sure I have not."

She stood up before he could speak again; she wanted to get out of this scene as quickly as she could. "Sha'n't we go back to the house?" she said.

As they walked along she was aware that he was regarding her with something that, if not disapproval, was closely akin to it. A woman who could have seen enough in that scamp of a Wennie Gilmore to let herself become engaged to him! But Mildred was troubling herself little about his thoughts. Her own thought of a moment before had arisen and was making chaos of her mind. What next?

She did not have to wait a moment to find out. As they neared the veranda the butler came to meet them.

"A lady, Mrs. Harrison, to see you, madame."

"But tell her I cannot see her," Mildred ordered hastily. "I can see no—"

A figure swept swiftly, gracefully down the veranda steps, on her face a smile of delighted recognition. Behind her on the veranda Mildred glimpsed Clara and Mrs. Dean.

"Why, my dear Countess!" exclaimed the strange woman. "I cannot tell you how glad I am to see you!" And before Mildred could speak, the visitor had strenuously embraced her and kissed her upon both cheeks. And holding one hand in both her own, she stood back and surveyed Mildred with eyes of ardent affection.

"You are looking ever so much better than when I visited you at your chateau!" cried Mrs. Harrison.

Thus far Mildred had not spoken—had only stared. It was a rather strikingly handsome woman that she saw, on the better side of thirty, with olive face now flushed with pleasure, and very dark eyes fringed with long and glossy lashes.

But now Mildred had to speak; and with Philip at her side and Mrs. Dean looking on from the veranda there was only one attitude she could take, at this moment at least, toward her visitor.

"This is indeed a pleasure," she man-

aged to get out.

"But you must have known I would have come straight to you," exclaimed the stranger. "Of course you expected me!"

"Of course," said Mildred.

"I was bound for Newport, but when I read about your being here I ran right out." She gave a silvery, half-reproving laugh. "This disappearance of yours was a most unkind trick to play upon your friends who were expecting you. But

how like you, Countess!"

Mildred's head was swimming, and to gain time she began to introduce Mrs. Harrison to the others. While this formality was going on, her mind worked in flashes. Who was this Mrs. Harrison who knew the Countess so intimately? Did she, Mildred, by some freakish coincidence resemble the Countess so closely that this intimate friend was deceived? Or was Mrs. Harrison just a clever woman who had discovered the deception Mildred was practising, and was here to play some astute game of her own?

As for Mildred, she determined to play her part until she could find out what lay behind this new development. "It was exceedingly kind of you to come so soon, Mrs. Harrison," she said with an attempt at ease.

The other raised her eyebrows in

charming reproach.

"Mrs. Harrison—after you had prom-

ised to call me Alice!"

"Alice—of course." And not to be outdone, Mildred kissed the cheek of her mysterious guest.

"That's better—that's like the old days at Chateau D'Autreval!" cried

Mrs. Harrison.

"Won't you be seated, Alice?" said

Mildred.

Clara, who had been an astounded spectator of this intimacy between Mildred and this evident friend of the real Countess, and who did not know what danger it might portend, judged it the part of discretion to get Mrs. Dean and Philip into the house and out of hearing —which she accomplished on the excuse of leaving the two friends alone.

"Well, what do you think of us Americans?" inquired Mrs. Harrison, with

her charming, affectionate smile.

"I think I shall like them," said Mildred.

"Oh, but they have not that—that finish of your French people. America is not like France—yet. And we have no estates that can compare with your

chateau and grounds."

"I think you are trying to flatter me—Alice," Mildred said aloud. And to herself she repeated: "Does this woman really believe me the Countess? Or is she an impostor, not knowing that I am one?"

"Flatter you—or your chateau? I cannot," quickly returned the sprightly Mrs. Harrison. "The month I spent with you last year stands out as altogether the most charming period of my life, and I have fallen completely in love with the Chateau D'Autreval. Tell me," she added quickly: "in your last letter you said you were planning to restore the marble terrace; are you going to do it?"

"I haven't fully determined."

"I hope you won't. It would be almost sacrilege to touch the terrace that Louis XIV once strolled upon."

One thing at least was becoming very evident; this strange guest did appear to know something about the Countess and

her home.

"That consideration has been influ-

encing me," said Mildred.

"I hope it will decide you. And how is your aunt, the Countess D'Abrantes?"

"Just as you knew her."

"Then her trouble wasn't cancer, after all, as you wrote me the doctors feared it was?"

"No. It disappeared of its own accord, and she is entirely well. The doctors are quite mystified about the whole matter."

"I'm delighted that she's herself." A reminiscent, affectionate smile came into Mrs. Harrison's dark eyes. "I fell

quite in love with your aunt, though I know she disapproved of me because of my republican birth. What a stiff royalist she was! I suppose that she still thinks France ceased to be with the fall of Napoleon III!"

"Yes."

"But think how sweet she was—what a fine, proud carriage she had!" sighed Mrs. Harrison. "And she must be sev-

enty, or past it, isn't she?"

Mildred felt that she was being driven more and more surely into a corner. In the last minute she had come to a definite conclusion regarding her guest. Mrs. Harrison, or whoever she might be, was, to put it melodramatically, a very clever and polished specimen of the adventuress. She had discovered that Mildred was an impostor, had in some manner learned a little about the Countess, and was now with extraordinary adroitness showing Mildred that she knew she was masquerading—her ultimate purpose being to blackmail her by threat of exposure. Mildred recalled a story recently in the papers about an adventurer in Newport—how he had, perhaps by pressure of some such kind, forced his way into the highest circles, and made use of the entrance to great houses to steal a small fortune in jewels.

Mildred made up her mind quickly. She leaned suddenly toward her guest

and demanded in a low voice:

"See here—what's your game?"

"My game!"

"Yes—what do you want from me? I know you want something. For I know that you know that I am not the Countess D'Autreval."

Mrs. Harrison stared at her blankly. "Not the Countess D'Autreval?"

For a moment Mildred half believed she had made a mistake. Astonishment could not wear a more natural face.

"Let's not pretend," Mildred went on sharply. "I know you have discovered me. And I know you have come here to force something out of me by threat of exposure."

"I assure you, Countess—"

"Drop the 'Countess'! What do you want?"

The slender, graceful, black-garbed

figure of the stranger had sunk reposefully back into the chair, and the dark eyes gazed at Mildred through their half-closed long black lashes. She did not at once speak.

Mildred was more sure than ever that an Old Man of the Sea, in the shape of this beautiful adventuress, had fastened himself upon her back. "What do you

want?" she repeated.

One slender hand of Mrs. Harrison made folds in her skirt.

"I see that Madame the Countess believes in coming to the point."

"Countess—nothing! You know you never saw me before. Did you?"

"I did not," admitted the dulcet voice of Mrs. Harrison.

"Then what do you want?" Mildred demanded once more.

"You have—ah—the very highest social position here," softly suggested Mrs. Harrison.

Mildred began vaguely to see.

"Well?"

"And anyone you openly befriended would be received anywhere in Norton."

So that was it! What this woman demanded, as the price of her silence, was to be introduced to the exclusives of Norton! For an instant Mildred was seized by a desire to laugh. She, Mildred Grantley, road actress, with a total estate amounting to fourteen dollars and some odd cents, in the role of social patron!

But she saw the situation's serious side. She had to do this woman's will or else make a super-hasty exit from

Norton.

"Would you mind telling me what

your purpose is here?"

"Perhaps not—if you do not mind telling me your purpose," was the easy reply.

Checkmate!

She gazed at the handsome, smiling, inscrutable face. She was all dismay. What a tangle this business had already got her into! And the good Lord only knew what was coming next. She wanted to leave Norton at once—but to do that would be to break the promise she had given Clara to see the business through. On the other hand, to stay—and in-

troduce this unknown woman to the society of Norton-let her practise her

adventuress's wiles-

Suddenly Mildred became aware that the hitherto inscrutable face of the stranger was no longer inscrutable. It was smiling-smiling as it had not smiled before—with a sparkling, mischievous delight. Then swiftly the stranger put a caressing hand on Mildred's shoulder and kissed her.

"Why-why-" stammered Mildred. "You do it splendidly—splendidly!" cried the stranger, with dancing eyes.

Mildred stared.

"What-who are you?"

"Who am I? You're sure you're not the Countess D'Autreval?"

"You know I'm not."

"Then if you're not"—she let out a low, ringing laugh, leaned close and spoke in a whisper—"if you're not the Countess, then I guess I must be!"

IX

MILDRED sank back limply and stared. But from the first moment she did not doubt her visitor's announcement, and later events proved that there was no reason for doubt. Now that she knew that her strange caller was the Countess herself, she quickly began to see that lady in a different light. The adroitness and cunning of the adventuress were seen as the savoir faire of the polished woman of the world; the schemes that had seemed to lurk in her dark eyes were now become the sparkle of mischief.

Mildred confessed to her identity, and to the reason for her being here, all of which the Countess heard with the gaiety which seemed to be one of the ruling qualities of her character. "We're already friends!" she cried when Mildred

had finished.

The Countess, in turn, told that she had spent an inconspicuous two days in Newport, when she had read in the paper that she was in reality at Norton: and she had decided to come on and investigate her alter ego. She confessed that Mildred had been right in her conjecture that the reason for her hasty disappearance had been to avoid accepting service in Wendell Gilmore's breach of promise suit. She had large investments in New York railroads, and she might have become involved in a long and unpleasant legal squabble had she allowed herself to be served in the case.

She seemed to take the suit as a delicious joke, despite her predicament; and she had no hard feeling against the youth who desired financial ointment applied

to his bruised affections.

"He's just a silly boy," she laughed. "I guess I flirted with him a bit in Paris —yes, I flirted quite a lot. But as for ever saying I would marry him"-she laughed again-"why, you'd only have to give one look at him to see how absurd is the idea. He has no groundsnone in the world!"

"What are you going to do?"

"Iust what I suggested a while agostay right here and have the Countess D'Autreval introduce me into society."

"But don't you want to become yourself again? Don't you want your name back?"

"What! And let that dollar hungry youth serve papers on the right person? No, thank you! You'll get out of it easily enough when you want to, but I couldn't."

She clutched Mildred's hand tightly

and her eves sparkled.

"Oh, isn't this a joyous situation!" she bubbled. "Mr. Wendell Gilmore is—what do you call it—goldbricked! And I shall remain here quietly, securely, and look on and see how your best society treats the Countess D'Autreval! Oh, what a book I shall have!"

She went rippling off into low, ecstatic laughter, in which Mildred had finally to join. She had played many parts, but this was the first time that Mildred Hartley, road actress, had been cast for the role of patron to a famous noblewoman.

"But." she asked suddenly. "will any more troubles be descending upon my head?"

"No; and while I am here I shall keep out of mischief," laughed the Countess. "It will be hard, but I'll do it."

"But suppose someone should appear

upon the scene who really knows you?"

"There's little likelihood of that; I

know almost no Americans."

The Countess suggested that it would be wisest to say that she was an American bred and educated in France, which would explain any Gallicisms she might inadvertently let fall. She added that she would stay at Norton, at the Inn, for a brief period, then would slip back to France without revealing her identity, and would leave it to Mildred to handle the situation after that as she chose.

Thus it was agreed; and later Clara was made a partner to the secret and the

arrangement.

With the danger of exposure and new contretemps removed, Mildred's adventure sank to a more humdrum but more enjoyable basis. Several days ensued that delighted her sense of humor. First of all, she appeared much in public with the Countess, honoring her with most intimate favor—the result being that on the second day Mrs. Dean invited the Countess to leave the Inn and come to her house as her guest, which invitation the Countess accepted. As for Mildred, there were parties galore—teas, yachting trips, balls-and she could not accept a tenth of the invitations that surged in upon her. She was the social sensation of that season at Norton. And Mildred, leaning back at her ease as it were, smiled graciously upon her devotees.

"You are wonderful-wonderful!" exulted the vivacious Countess, after their first day as patron and protegé. "When I die, I shall will you my title."

"I'm not doing it, Countess," returned Mildred. "It's the title. You are seeing what's in a name—in Amer-

ica."

While society as a mass was worshiping, matters that touched Mildred more intimately were rapidly developing. From the first Jack Raymond had seemed struck by her, and daily he grew more attentive. She found him increasingly agreeable as she came to know him—somewhat impulsive, but clever, goodnatured, with a big and genuine interest in his architectural work. This last impressed her worker's spirit, for the

men who hovered about her were idlers, or men who played at business, or, at the best, men who did not create but merely juggled with other people's money and a little of their own.

"Clara," Mildred asked one morning, "why was it that you and Mr. Raymond couldn't make a go of it? He seems to

me an unusually fine fellow."

"Oh, Jack's good enough. We just weren't cut out for each other, that's all."

"But you only tried each other for a

vear."

"It seemed a century. I say, Mill, if you think so well of him, why not pick him out for yourself?"

"What would you say if another woman, right before your eyes, were to

try to make up to him?"

"I'd say, 'God bless you, my children.'"

Mildred shook her head with an amused smile.

"I'm not so sure of that. If Clara Raymond is like what she used to be, I think she might show temper and fight—even though she had thrown the man away."

"Try it, my dear, and see. You're

welcome to him."

Clara spoke carelessly; evidently she had not given the possibility a single serious thought. But in Mildred's mind the question could not help rising: Was Clara's ex-husband, believing her the Countess, allowing himself to fall in love with her?

A little later, filled with this thought, she had sauntered out upon the veranda, when suddenly Huxheim joined her. It had been Huxheim's custom to motor over every day to consult with Jack about the plans for his new theater; and he had not lost a single chance to be with Mildred. She was very much the grand lady toward him; though courte-ously condescending, she made him feel his place. And he, a king in his own realm, accustomed to the kingly homage of having his boots licked by scores of playwrights and thousands of actors—he was eagerly and subserviently polite.

"Lordy, if he ever finds me out!" She

had shivered more than once.

Huxheim might not have the manners of a French duke, but he was swift to plan and act. On this morning he remarked:

"I've just read two of your books,

Countess."

"My books!" she queried blankly.
"In the English translation, of

course."

Mildred recalled that she was a fa-

mous authoress. "Oh!" she said.

"And they're great stuff," continued Huxheim, proceeding to make himself solid. "Very clever—good comedy; and some scenes suggest that you might be a playwright if you wanted to. Have you ever written a play?"

Mildred did not know whether she had or not. But she took a chance on it.

"No."

"If ever you do, I wish you'd let me see it." Mildred knew he was paying her one of the highest compliments in his power; Huxheim did not ask to see plays—he was always being asked. "If it has good situations," he added, "but isn't quite right technically, I can hand some fellow a few hundred to attend to that. I wish you'd think it over."

"You are very kind," said Mildred

with one of her gracious smiles.

"It might be a very good thing, if you care for stage success," urged Huxheim. "If any manager in America can make a play go, I can. Ask anybody. Of course the play's got to have some sort of an idea—but there's no doubt about your play having that."

She eyed him more closely. What did this persistence mean? What was he

driving at?

He was silent a moment, then went on ingratiatingly, looking at her keenly:

"You could double your audience; two countries, two continents, instead of one." Then he added more cautiously, with all his suavity: "America is a mighty good country, Countess. Have you ever thought that it might be an ideal plan to divide one's time between America and France?"

Suddenly the truth exploded like a bomb in her mind. The great Sam Huxheim was paying court to her!

She could hardly keep from shricking.

But she was saved from inflicting that indignity upon the monarch of Broadway by the appearance of Mrs. Dean, who had motored over to take her to lunch at Deanwood.

"I'll think it over, Mr. Huxheim; thank you," she smiled as she swept

awav.

"Remember," he called after her, "that this is the afternoon that you promised to come over to see 'The Golden Spoon,'"

For the first half of the run to Deanwood, Mildred listened and answered mechanically. Sam Huxheim making love to her! It was too rich to be true!

But soon her ears pricked up, for Mrs. Dean had in some manner guided the talk around to her son, and was now tak-

ing Mildred into her confidence.

"I hope you'll get to know Philip," she was saying. "I am a mother, of course, and suppose I have a mother's prejudice. But I do think I am strictly within the truth when I say that he is a very unusual young man. And I do think I can say without boasting that he belongs to one of the best families of America."

Mildred had already discovered the liberties permissible in a woman of title, and a wild, perverse humor sprang up in her. She kept silent and managed to put into her silence a most obvious skepticism.

"You have heard something against our family?" Mrs. Dean asked quickly.

"I believe someone was telling me something about a—oh, yes—a Mr. John Grantley," she answered sweetly.

Mrs. Dean flushed.

"Even the best of families have their undesirable offshoots. It is no more than fair to us, Countess, to inform you that at the last we never recognized Mr. Grantley as one of us. I hope you have heard nothing else?"

"Well, I was told of something more," confessed Mildred with wicked delight. "Someone spoke of a Mildred Grantley

—an actress, I believe,"

Mrs. Dean flushed more deeply. She

spoke with emphatic dignity,

"I hardly need inform you, Countess, that we have never recognized her!"

"Yes, so I was told," said Mildred.

Mrs. Dean regained her composure and returned to the subject of her son.

"You perhaps may have a few—few misconceptions concerning him. Perhaps you have been told that there is an attachment between him and your friend, Mrs. Raymond?"

"I believe it has been mentioned."

"There was something of the sort, to be sure, but I did not deem such an alliance—meaning no offense to your hostess—wholly desirable, and Mrs. Raymond now quite agrees with me. So that affair is a thing wholly of the past. And as for his interest in the theater—"

"Is he interested in the theater?"

interrupted Mildred.

"I thought perhaps he or Mrs. Raymond might have spoken of it to you. He once had an idea, and in fact was very persistent, that he wanted to be a playwright. But you understand that I could take only one position in such a matter."

"Oh, of course."

"I was firm, and eventually he gave it up. I believe I can say for Philip that he is as thoroughly bred a gentleman as there is in America. And I think," she added, "that he can stand comparison with the best gentlemen of Europe."

If Mildred was somewhat bewildered by this talk, her bewilderment cleared when after luncheon, at which Philip Dean and the charming Mrs. Harrison were participants, Mrs. Dean remarked:

"Countess, people are good enough to tell me that I have the finest Italian pool in America. I'm sure you would be interested in seeing it. Philip, will you show the Countess the pool while Mrs. Harrison and I have a little chat?"

For the second time that day Mildred wavered between laughing and sinking down in utter collapse. For unless every instinct was serving her falsely, Mrs. Dean was throwing her son at her head.

 \mathbf{X}

PHILIP led Mildred down the marble walk, across the stiffly proper lawn and into the quadrangle of cypresses that en-

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closed the marble-lined pool, whose filtered six feet of water was so clear that one could have read a printed page lying at its bottom. They sat down on a marble bench, and Philip, carrying out his mother's request, Baedekerized a while about the pool, telling what famous architect had designed it, what famous garden near Florence had supplied its model.

Mildred listened with, at the maximum, one brain cell. Inwardly she was gasping with an almost hysterical humor. Mrs. Dean, proudest of all snobs, was trying to capture her for her son! And Jack Raymond was apparently interested in her, and Huxheim was undoubtedly so—not to include numerous young swells who had been hovering about her with as much devotion as they dared to show. Penniless, a nobody, and yet all this adulation!

Behind the calm exterior she was showing Philip Dean, she had to laugh. Then succeeded a more bitter mood. All this attention merely because she was decked in borrowed clothes and a borrowed title! She was no cleverer, in no wise better, than when she had been plain Mildred Grantley. And yet how the adoring society of Norton would shrink away from her if they knew the

What a farcical, artificial institution this American upper crust was! She hated it.

Her mind flashed ahead for an instant. Where was this masquerading all going to end? At the best, she could only see herself jumping from one tank town to another—a life lived in stuffy railroad cars, cold, dingy hotels, and in playing unapplauded secondhand parts. That, after this luxury and adulation!

Well, it was better.

A few minutes later she and Philip—their being together was another adroit maneuver on the part of Mrs. Dean—were skimming toward Huxheim's place. The irony and bitterness ebbed out of her, and her humor flowed back. Anyhow, this was a lark while it lasted. She began to pay attention to the young man at her side. Though she had at first regarded him lightly as a mere idler, there

was something about him that piqued her curiosity; she had a dim sense that there was perhaps something in him that did not show upon the surface; she had a mild sense of mystery. And her curiosity was quickened by what his mother had said about his interest in the stage.

"I'm told you once thought a lot about the theater," she said as they sped "What made you give it up?"

"I hardly need tell you, Countess, how my mother and the world-my world, I mean—would regard my going into such

a thing seriously."

He smiled pleasantly enough. knew he rather liked her; this despite his disapproval of her because of the Wennie Gilmore affair and the stories of her gaiety that the gossipy cables had carried beneath the Atlantic. But looking at him keenly, she found herself wondering if he was telling her all the truth.

"If not busy at the theater, then why are you not busy at something else?" she demanded with her charming Count-

ess's audacity.

He raised his eyebrows slightly.

"You surprise me. I supposed that you cared only for gentlemen."

"Gentlemen!"

"Men who do not have to work—who live off the return from their estates."

For an instant she had a half-thought

that he, too, was a bit ironical.

"Oh, you men of leisure are all right to amuse ourselves with," she answered lightly. "But the men we really like are the men who are doing worth-while work."

"And the theater—that is worthwhile work? You have no prejudice against it?"

"I? No, indeed!"

"You surprise me, Countess," he said

again.

"I'd respect you much more if you were an—an actor or a playwright, instead of being just a gentleman."

She was a wee bit frightened at her audacity. He looked at her keenly: for an instant she thought he was on the brink of telling her something she imagined he was keeping hid. But he merely remarked:

"You should try to convert my mother."

She shifted the subject.

"Do you know anything about 'The Golden Spoon'?"

"Mr. Huxheim has let me come over to two or three of the rehearsals."

"Ah! Then your interest in the theater is not entirely dead! How did you like it?"

"The play, or the acting?"

"The acting," said Mildred with quick interest.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Wait and judge for yourself." Then he added: "A little story has been in the papers about the play that may be illuminating to you, Countess, as to the intellectual caliber of our American managers. Mr. Huxheim was the first manager who read the play. He contemptuously returned it—said there was nothing to it; and a lot of other managers did the same. The agent who was handling the play finally got it produced in London, where it seems to have made a great success. Whereupon Mr. Huxheim embraced it and brought it to America with triumphal music from the horns of press agents. You couldn't imagine our American managers could be like that, could you?"

Mildred could, but did not say so.

"Why didn't the author rise in his dignity and refuse to let Mr. Huxheim

touch it?" she asked.

"Oh, I suppose he was glad enough to get the play on in America. The author, however, does not seem to have appeared in the matter; no one seems to know much about John Maitland. The thing has been entirely in the hands of an agent."

At that moment the big car turned through a pair of stone pillars into a carefully groomed macadam road and swept up before Huxheim's country home, a brand new affair composed in the early Tudor style. Huxheim himself hurried out to meet them, and with his best smile handed the graciously condescending Mildred from the car. The first act was just about to start, he said, and he led them straight through the great hall of his manor house, through a carefully kept garden and around to a stable, built in the same style as the house. The barn was cleared of its animals; Huxheim, contleman farmer, kept his stable much cleaner than ever Huxheim, theatrical manager, kept his

stages.

Mildred, manipulating her veil so that by no unlucky chance Trixie Morton should get a clear view of her face, shifted the wicker chair provided for her into the shadow of the doorway, and almost at once the performance began, the actors making their entrance from and exits into the stalls on either side of the barn's great open space. From the instant she had entered the stable-theater, Mildred's heart had begun to throb with violence; the actress in her was quiveringly alive—eager, hungry. Doomed as she had been for years to act in third rate pieces, "The Golden Spoon," when she had read it, had filled her with delight over the play and with envy of the person whose fortune it was going to be to be cast for Mary Winters.

"The Golden Spoon" was a satirical comedy dealing with America's upper social crust-with a clever plot, witty lines and splendid characterization. Mary Winters was something of an interloper into this highest stratumthere had been no golden spoon in her mouth at her birth; and though marriage had set her among these demigods and demigoddesses, she still remained very human, with an audacious humor that delighted in disconcerting the noble folk about her by bringing them suddenly face to face with their own absurdities and inanities. Mary Winters was a delicious light comedy part, demanding charm and subtlety and intellect from

its impersonator.

Mildred waited breathless for Trixie Morton to come on as Mary Winters. Presently she entered. One half-second of the somewhat buxom Trixie, and Mildred began to writhe. For Trixie was playing Mary Winters as broad

farce.

Mildred suffered all the agony of the tortured artistic soul during the thirty minutes of the act. She sprang up the instant the final word was spoken. "Let's go," she breathed.

They escaped, and two minutes later were humming away in the big touring car.

"Well, what do you think?" Philip demanded.

"What do you?" she returned.

"Oh, Lord!" he burst out. "Wasn't that Trixie person awful?"

She could have loved him for those

words.

"Awful! Simply awful!" she groaned.
"Huxheim ought to be sent to the electric chair for casting her as Mary Winters! Surely there must be actresses who could do it better!"

"Plenty!" Then she added daringly:

"I know of at least one."

"American?"

"Yes."

He spoke eagerly, almost imploringly: "Countess, if I'm not mistaken, your word would have weight with Mr. Huxheim. Can't you suggest this other actress to him?"

She laughed—a little grimly.

"As for this particular actress, I happen to know that Mr. Huxheim thinks she cannot act."

"Who is she?"

She hesitated; then her daring overcame her discretion.

"A person quite unknown. She's never had a chance, but she has ability. Her name is Mildred Grantley."

He gave a start.

"Mildred Grantley! That's curious. Do you know, she's a fourth, sixth, eighth or something-of-the-sort cousin of mine. I've often wanted to meet her."

"Indeed!" said Mildred.

"By the way, where did you meet her, Countess?"

"Oh, in Paris"—which was no lie. And then she quickly asked, to change the conversation from its risky channel: "Why do you not yourself suggest to Mr. Huxheim that he get someone else for Mary Winters?"

"I have. But he said that, though her acting might seem rather broad to me, he knew it would exactly suit the crowd. There was nothing more that an

outsider like me could say."

They talked on about the acting, and also about the play. On this homeward ride Philip Dean was a distinct surprise to Mildred. He showed an animation such as he had not before revealed; and he showed a knowledge of acting, plays, the theater, that was not merely the superficial knowledge of the amateur. It was the knowledge of the man who had watched and studied—of the man who knows. Plainly this was his greatest interest. Her original instinctive feeling toward him, a half-contempt, was mounting rapidly toward admiration and respect. But why, she kept asking herself, did he not get out into the world and do something?

They got back to Clara's house in time to join Clara, Mrs. Dean and the real Countess at tea. At its end, and just before the latter was to return with Mrs. Dean to Deanwood, she made known to Mildred by signs that she wished to

speak to her alone.

Mildred rose and slipped her hand

through the other's arm.

"Will you excuse Mrs. Harrison and me for a moment? You must allow old friends," she added with her gracious, highborn smile, "to talk over their little secrets."

When they were up in the privacy of Mildred's sitting room the Countess caught Mildred in her arms and bubbled over with ecstatic mirth.

"Oh-oh! It's too good to be true!"

she gasped. "What?"

The Countess sank back into a chair and gazed at Mildred with eyes that glowed with mischievous joy.

"My dear, guess for a thousand years, and you can never guess why Mrs. Dean

invited me to be her guest!"

"Because you were the friend of the Countess D'Autreval," smiled Mildred.

"Yes, but that's only one part of her reason. Oh, if you could only have been hidden and heard our talk after you and young Mr. Dean went away! She thought she was very adroit—very. When she had gradually worked around to the point, she said that I seemed to be intimately acquainted with the Countess D'Autreval."

"And you?" smiled Mildred.

"'I do not wish to boast of my acquaintance with the Countess,' I said modestly, 'but the fact is, I have been quite intimate with her—well, for some years.'"

Mildred joined in the laugh.

"She then said that naturally I must be acquainted with the Countess's tastes, preferences, little idiosyncrasies. I admitted I was—a little. Whereupon she confided to me that her son had fallen in love with you—"

"I don't believe it!" cried Mildred.

"And she, being a loving mother, naturally wanted to further her son's desire. It would really be a good match for both parties. And then she asked me, not in such blunt words, of course, if I would advise her what was"—she was almost choking—"what was the best way—to capture—the Countess!"

"To—capture—the—Countess!" Mil-

dred repeated dazedly.

Then together they burst into laugh-

ter.

"Oh, but isn't it too good to be true?" cried the Countess. "Oh! Oh!" But after a moment she recovered herself, and sat gazing at Mildred, audacious mischief in her eyes.

"Tell me, what can I do to help Mrs.

Dean—and you?"

"Me!" cried Mildred.

"Yes, you," said this madcap creature. "For you're more than half in love with Mrs. Dean's precious son."

"Why—I'm nothing of the sort!"

gasped Mildred.

"Oh, yes you are—though you may not know it yet," cried the sparkling Countess. "And oh, what a joy it would be to help Mrs. Dean join you two together!"

XI

THE audacious statement of the delightfully mischievous Countess opened Mildred's eyes to a fact sooner than she would have perceived it unaided. If she was not in love with Philip Dean, at least she was perilously near it.

The discovery at first dazed her. Then, as she realized its various aspects, she was seized with pain and consternation. She had blithely come to Norton to play her part in a comedy. And behold, the comedy had turned to tragedy

-her tragedy!

She had come here to help win a man for another woman—and here she was in love with that man herself. To be sure, in watching Clara and Philip together, she had before this time thought she had detected that there was no true deep love between the pair, and she had guessed how the engagement had come about—a friendly feeling had developed into a forced sentimentality from mere lack of other occupation for mind and emotion. And in this development, she was more than half certain, Clara had been the one to do most of the leading on.

But however slight the love, Clara and he were engaged. And had they not been, Philip's pride and the mighty pride of his mother and also Mildred's own made the very thought of Philip loving her the most impossible of im-

Her first impulse was to leave Norton that very hour. But the spirit of adventure was upon her; she was reckless, and she was soul hungry, heart hungry. Temptation came. Why should she not stay and taste the bitter-sweet while she could, and then go away and forget it? Besides, had she not given her promise to Clara and the Countess?

She decided to stay.

possibilities.

The days that followed had a new sting, to be sure; but they were packed with ironic amusement. Society continued to pay her its devoirs. Mrs. Dean continued attentive and continued to show an air of proprietorship, and managed to leave Philip alone with Mildred as often as possible. And Huxheim, the great Sam Huxheim, was her constant if not always graceful courtier. Besides, several young sprigs of the Norton dollar nobility were paying very concentrated respects; and Mildred was sufficiently sophisticated to know that, unless she soon vanished, she would be kept moderately busy refusing the offer of hearts and hands.

The Countess continued to report to

Mildred with great delight how Mrs. Dean was pumping her for suggestions as to the best means for pleasing and capturing Norton's distinguished guest. "What a schemer—what a tyrant—what a snob!" she would exclaim. "My dear, it's your duty to your country to give that woman's pride an awful fall!"

The Countess herself, charming though she was, was a constant source of uneasiness to Mildred. She never knew in what manner the capricious humor of that spoiled child of fancy might next break out. Her best hope was that she might manage to restrain herself till they were all safely out of this present adventure.

"Your aspiring mother-in-law was really too much for me today," the Countess remarked one afternoon. "I couldn't help myself—the impulse was too strong—and I'm afraid I said something that was sweetly, cuttingly impolite. Though she deserved worse."

"How did she take it?" queried Mil-

dred anxiously.

"She looked at me as though I had been guilty of lèse-majesté," laughed the Countess. "But she controlled herself, for, you see, I'm the intimate friend of the Countess D'Autreval."

The next afternoon, while Mildred, Clara and Mrs. Dean were sitting at their ease on Clara's veranda, Mrs. Dean

suddenly inquired of Mildred:

"Countess, how long have you known Mrs. Harrison?"

At that moment Mildred's mind was on the irony of her relation to Philip Dean, and she absently replied:

"Only a short time."

At this there was a snap to Mrs. Dean's masterful eye. The same instant Mildred was aware that she had made a slip, and she tried to correct it by glib prevarication. Since Mrs. Dean did not pursue the subject, she thought she had quieted any suspicion her blunder might have aroused. She little guessed to what that slip of an instant was going to lead.

During these days Jack Raymond came and went, bland and smiling, treating Clara with the careless but affectionate good nature of an older

brother. He seemed to be making a motto of the remark with which he had reappeared at his old home: "Just because we happened to have been married once, Clara, is no reason why we shouldn't be good friends." To Mildred he was more seriously attentive. She wondered if he were really falling in love with her. If so, she was sorry. She liked him more every day, but she knew her liking contained no slightest atom of regard of a warmer sort.

Presently a change began to evidence itself in Clara. She was moody, at times was irritable. Her sharpness extended even to Philip Dean. She had little to say to him when he came over, and her acerbity drove him frequently to Mildred for companionship. Mildred was not sorry to befriend him in his deserted hours, but she felt that she was storing up endless bitterness for the years ahead.

Clara's irritability she could not understand. Clara had a temper, as she knew well enough, but this moodiness was something more than mere temper. Mildred asked what was the matter. "Nothing. What are you talking about?" was the crisp reply. Two or three times she snapped at her. The time was drawing near that Mildred had set for her disappearance, and she determined to go before there should be an open break between her and her friend.

It occurred to her that while she lingered on at Norton it might be advisable to reconnoiter the theatrical situation. And so one morning—it was the morning of the day on which Mrs. Dean was going to give a great party in her honor—before the house was stirring, she caught a train for New York, went to a hotel, where she changed into her own clothes, which she had brought along in a bag, and made the rounds of the actors' agents and the managers' offices. She even had the temerity to apply at Huxheim's. But no one had a part for Mildred Grantley.

When she got back, Jack Raymond, hearing her inquiring for Clara, stepped out from his work and asked to speak to her. She consented, and he led her into his study and seated her beside its long

table littered with sketches and blue prints. He sat down before her.

"Countess, I want to tell you something and ask you something," he announced.

Her blood quickened. If that "something" were one particular thing, she would be sorry. It would grieve her to give Jack Raymond pain.

"Go on," she said.

"You know what caused the break between Clara and me—an alleged affair with a certain Trixie Morton."

"I have heard so-yes."

"I did not contest Clara's suit, because, if she wanted to be free, I wanted to let her. But I want you to know, Countess, that there was nothing whatever to that affair. You saw Miss Morton over at Mr. Huxheim's the other day; do you suppose I could ever care for her?"

"I hardly see how you could," Mildred remarked with very deep sincerity.

"Of course I never cared for her. The thought's absurd! I was indiscreet, perhaps—but, believe me, nothing more."

Mildred expressed herself as glad to

hear it.

"Countess," he continued earnestly, "I have come to admire you. And more than that—to trust you. If you will allow me, I should like to open my heart to you, and—"

But at that instant the door was flung open and Clara appeared. Her face was

hot with anger.

"I saw the pair of you come in here together," she flamed at them. "And you"—she turned to Jack—"I've heard what you were saying. I must remark that you are nervy people, both of you! And you"—to Mildred—"the way you're carrying on in my own house with my divorced husband!"

Mildred felt an uprush of wrath; but Jack got in the first word, and it was

very bland.

"I can't see the point of your objection, Clara—"

"Mrs. Raymond," she snapped.

He howed

"I can't see your objection, Mrs. Raymond, since you are going to marry Philip Dean."

She was taken aback, but her anger did not subside. "It's scandalous—it's

an insult!"

"Well," he broke in amiably, "if it hasn't been pleasant for you to see me carrying on in your own house with the Countess, perhaps it hasn't been altogether pleasant for me to see you carrying on, in what used to be my house, with Philip Dean."

"I—I—well, it's nasty bad taste," cried Clara. "And I'm not going to

stand for it!"

"You need not," Mildred put in hotly.
"I'll take the next train back to New York!"

She ran in a fury out of the study and up to her own suite. In a moment she had her borrowed plumage off, and soon she was again in the rather worn gray suit in which a few hours since she had made the rounds of the theatrical offices.

Thus plainly dressed, she was on the point of hurrying out of the house, when she recalled that thus walking away in plain daylight in such clothes would mean the instantaneous collapse of the pretty myth about her being the Countess. Clara perhaps deserved no better than to be left to face the situation alone as best she could, but it would hardly be decent to the real Countess. In fairness she could hardly do less than send the Countess warning and to wait till after dark, when she could manage to slip away unnoticed.

She sat down at one of the windows and gazed over the shrubbery toward the Sound, whose corrugated surface glinted dully in the late sunlight. She was still hot with anger, and bitterness ate at her like an acid. She was a fool ever to have come to Norton. Not a soul here really cared for her—not even Clara, save in so far as she had need of

her.

Her bitter meditations were interrupted by a knock.

"Who's there?" she asked crisply.

"Clara. Let me in."

She hesitated, then unlocked and opened the door and stood stiffly at one side. The next instant Clara's arms were clutched about her neck.

"Forgive me, Millie dear," begged

Clara, half crying. "I'm a nasty little beast, and what I said was simply awful. But you ought to know me well enough to know I didn't mean it. Do forgive me, dear!"

Mildred was bewildered by this volteface, but there was no mistaking Clara's

sincerity.

"All right," she said a little wearily.
"Thank you—I don't deserve it—but I'll never behave like that again!"
She noticed that Mildred had changed her dress. "Hello, what have you got your old clothes on for?"

"I'm going back to my own social

level—and a job, if I can find one."

"You're going to do nothing of the sort!" cried Clara. "Why, there's that big party Mrs. Dean is giving tonight especially for you. If you leave, it'll be because of the nasty things I said, and I'll hate myself forever and ever. Please, don't go, Mildred! Please!"

A little more of this pleading and Mildred yielded. "But I'll stay only on one condition—that we don't go through with your plan about showing up Mrs.

Dean."

To Mildred it had come that Philip Dean would detest her forever if he learned she was in collusion to mortify his mother; and her highest desire, so far as he was concerned, was to slip away and out of his life without his learning her identity. If she and the Countess disappeared at the same time, which course she was going to urge, no one here save Clara need ever know the deception that had been practised.

Mildred had expected opposition to

this. But here she was surprised.

"I was going to suggest the same thing myself. And now, dear, I'm just filled with the nasty taste of what I said, and I'm off for a long spin in my car to clear it out of my system." And with a kiss and a very tight hug, she was gone.

Mildred changed into a garb more becoming her station in life as a noblewoman—all the while wondering at Clara's behavior and revolving somewhat curious suspicions. By the time she was dressed a maid announced that Mr. Huxheim had called.

She went down and greeted him with

her usual light smile of gracious condescension—but within she smiled a smile of a very different sort. Only a few hours since the office manager of this great little man before her had curtly told her that there was not even so much for her

as a part in a road company.

"I've done all the work I can down here with 'The Golden Spoon,'" Huxheim said when they were seated in the drawing room. "This semi-vacation I've been crowding in is over; tomorrow we begin final rehearsals at the Longacre Theater in New York. So," he added with a soft look budding in his eyes, "I shall no longer have the pleasure of seeing you as frequently as I have during the last two weeks."

Mildred deftly steered away from this

tender danger.

"You still think well of the chances of

'The Golden Spoon'?"

"Oh, it's a gamble, of course. Every play is. But it ought to repeat its London success."

She tried to speak casually. "You are still as pleased as ever with the young woman who plays the part of Mary Winters?"

"Trixie Morton? Oh, yes—she'll make good. You still object to her?"

"I'm afraid I do, Mr. Huxheim."

"I admit Miss Morton hasn't the bearing and manners of—ah—pardon me—say yourself, Countess. But where am I to find an actress that has?"

"You would really like to know?"

"I certainly would."

Mildred gave the daring that had been

rising in her its way.

"I met a young American actress in Paris that I think could do the part almost ideally. Her name was—let me see —yes, it was Mildred Grantley."

Huxheim stared, then burst into a

laugh.

"Mildred Grantley! Why, that girl came around bothering me a couple of weeks ago. You've made a mistake, Countess," he added good-humoredly, "for she can't act at all."

"Oh, can't she?" said Mildred sweetly,

lowering her eyes.

"I guess we'll have to let Miss Morton do the best she can," he said with his good humor. He leaned nearer; his manner grew suddenly serious. "Countess, this is the last time I can get over here, and I did not come to talk about a mere play. Do you remember what I once said about it's being an ideal life to divide each year between Europe and America? Well, Countess, what I want to say is—" and before Mildred could get in a word the hand, fortune, glory and prospects of Samuel Huxheim, autocrat of the American stage, were lying at her feet.

She had thought this proposal would come some time, and she had intended. if it came, to get a sweet revenge. But Huxheim surprised her. Crude though he was, vulgar though he was, monstrous as was the thought that his short little body was the repository of dictatorial power over a noble art-still there was something solid and straightforward about him. He was not at all absurd, gauche. True, he was led to this proposal by the glitter of her name and the imagined glory of such a match; but he did not maunder about love—he did not put on a sickly surface of sentimentality. And so Mildred expressed her regret in very decent terms.

He was disappointed, but not heartbroken. "I hope you will give me the honor of still counting myself among

your friends," said he.

"Certainly."

"As for you, Countess, you will never lack for friends; but if you should ever need a friend or a favor, I shall be proud if you will call on me."

Mildred's mischievous daring again

raised its head.

"Suppose I should decide to turn actress and come to you for a part?"

"Ask, and it's yours!" he said heart-

ily. "But you are only jesting."

She watched him out with a sigh and a wry smile. He had offered her his hand. If he had only offered her a job!

XII

MRS. DEAN'S ball that night was the greatest social event of the Norton season; and was lent an added charm and

distinction by its being tacitly understood that it was given in honor of that piquant, dashing, slightly eccentric and delightfully mysterious personage, the

Countess D'Autreval.

Mrs. Dean was not at all averse to legitimate newspaper attention—it was a deference that was due her station. though her station required that she should seem to ignore it; and so, while notables and notablesses were dancing in the big ballroom, a group of New York reporters were absorbing the details of the function as transferred to them through the thin, precise lips of Mrs. Dean's ultra-dignified butler. The reporters were more numerous than at any of Mrs. Dean's previous affairs, and much more curious—due to the presence of that popular newspaper character, the Countess.

At the very end of the first dance Mrs. Dean begged Mildred's partner to excuse her, and led Mildred into her private sitting room, which was situated on the same floor. Mrs. Dean's proud and sternly handsome face wore a look of suppressed excitement.

"Countess, I have something to say to you that may surprise you—and then

it may not."

"What about?"

"About your friend, Mrs. Harrison."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mildred.

"If I seem to exceed the liberties permissible in a hostess, my dear Countess," she went on, "it has been to protect you, a foreigner on our shores, from-ah-perhaps the machinations of an American."

Mildred was suddenly bewildered.

"I do not understand."

A very knowing look came into the face of Mrs. Dean. She moved an impressive half-step nearer.

"Countess, I know that your friend Mrs. Harrison is not all that she pre-

tends to be."

"No?" breathed Mildred.

"I became suspicious after the first few days. Her actions were—well, queer. When I caught you off your guard that day and you said you had known her for but a short time, I was confirmed in my suspicion. I thought best to put a private detective—"

"A detective!"

"It was to protect you, my dear Countess," Mrs. Dean reassured her.

"And he found out what?"

"He made his report to me only an hour or two ago. He traced her back as far as Newport, where she had been for a day or two. Her actions there were strange-very suspicious. Beyond Newport all trace of her vanished."

"What do you think?"

"That Mrs. Harrison is not Mrs. Har-

rison. She is an imposter!"

"Ye-yes?" Mildred gulped down a wild laugh. Would the strange twists to

her adventure never cease?

"You must know something about this, Countess, but I do not ask you to confide in me," said Mrs. Dean with a searching gaze, yet in a tone of sympathy. "If I am not mistaken, this adventuress has in some way got a hold on you-I do not blame you, Countessand is forcing you to pass her off as an old friend.

"I do not know her purpose," Mrs. Dean continued. "Perhaps it may be robbery; you remember the recent Newport jewelry case. The fact is, I've missed a pearl necklace since she came. But more likely her purpose is to marry some susceptible young man with money." Her face glowed at Mildred with protective benignancy. "But have no fear. I am not yet through. I will

save you from her."

Mildred thanked her, but not very coherently, and they returned to the ballroom, where Mildred was immediately whirled away in the arms of a scion of the Norton nobility. At the end of the waltz she refused the attentions of several gallants in the cavalier fashion forgivable in her rank, and managed, without Mrs. Dean observing her, to draw the Countess out of the ballroom and downstairs into a corner of the veranda screened off by a row of dwarfed cypresses. Here she whispered what had just passed between herself and Mrs. Dean.

"Oh, oh, this was worth coming to America for!" cried the Countess. "But do you know why Mrs. Dean is doing it, my dear? To get into your good graces —to place you under obligation to her to help win you for her son! Oh! Oh!"

Her rippling laughter was none too carefully muffled. The next instant a man's form appeared within the cy-

"I trust that I do not interrupt," said

Philip Dean.

"We were only gossiping, and we're all through," the Countess welcomed

The music in the ballroom had started

again. Philip turned to Mildred.

"I have been hunting for you. This

is my dance, you know.'

"Then some young gallant must be hunting for me," exclaimed the Countess gaily. Suddenly she kissed Mildred. "I hope that she succeeds," she laughed with mischievous meaning, and disappeared.

Mildred slipped a hand through Phil-

ip's arm.

"Shall we go up?"

"If you don't mind, Countess, I'd

rather sit this dance out."

With languid grace she sank back into the wicker settee in which she and the real Countess had just been sitting. He took a place beside her. In a moment all the comedy of her situation had ebbed out of her, and she was quivering with a sense of stolen pleasure—yes, and with poignant pain. For she was to talk to him this once—and perhaps again a time or two; but after that—never!

The light from an incandescent bulb in the ceiling fell full upon his face. Mildred studied it keenly from beneath her mask of aristocratic insouciance. was clean cut, sensitive, intelligent and very human; it had hardly a quality in common with his mother's. Also it showed that he was under a deep strain.

After a commonplace or two, he said

abruptly:

"You told me yesterday that you would soon have to be leaving us. Do you yet know when you'll go?"

"In a day or two; perhaps any hour." "Then I may not get another chance

to see you?"

She tried to smile lightly—and failed. "Oh, a mere bird of passage is never missed."

"I think—you're wrong, Countess." His tone was forced.

She did not speak.

His face had become very pale. He sat with taut, interlocked fingers. Then his voice came out again—huskily:

"I know I should not speak of this but tonight it may be my last chance and I'm going to run the risk of making you despise me forever. Of course you know about my engagement to Mrs. Raymond?"

She nodded.

"Don't think I'm a cad if you can help it, please—but the fact is, Clara does not really care for me—except as a friend. And I see now that I do not care for her. The whole affair," he groaned, "has been a piece of midsummer madness. If we were to marry, it would be a tragedy for both of us—a tragedy!" He paused. The hands gripped more tightly. "But we'll never marry. Clara will see this as I do, if she does not already see it, and will call it off."

Mildred found it hard to speak with the right degree of mere friendly calm-

ness.

"I appreciate very much your giving me your confidence, Mr. Dean."

"But giving you my confidence isn't all," he cried. "Don't you understand?" Mildred did not trust herself to speak.

"I know it must sound cheap to you, and caddish, for a man to say this who is nominally engaged—but this is my only

chance. I love you!"

At his strained, impassioned words Mildred's whole being was set spinning in a breathless ecstasy. For a moment she lived in a bliss higher than that of the highest heaven. He loved her! Her every woman's fiber yearned thrillingly to yield to the pleading look in his face.

"I love you!" he repeated. He leaned "And, Countess—can you ever closer.

care for me?"

At the word "Countess" she came tumbling down from her heights of bliss. She remembered. It was not really she that he loved; it was the lady of high degree that he imagined her to be. If he knew who his imagined Countess was, an obscure road actress, with a dot that had dwindled to ten dollars—would he ever have spoken thus? Granted even that he had come to love Mildred Grantley. he would never have allowed his love to

pass his lips!

She turned sick with revulsion. Then great wave of bitterness surged through her. She saw the impossibility, the irony of it all. At that moment she almost hated him.

"Can you ever care for me?" he re-

peated.

She could not resist the impulse to make him suffer; she had so much pain

at her own heart.

"I feel honored," she said with her most aristocratic air. "But one of my family— It is rather difficult to explain without giving you offense, Mr. Dean."

"You mean you would not marry a

plain American?"

"That is putting it very baldly."

"Then there is no hope?"

She shook her head grimly. "I fear it is entirely out of the question, Mr. Dean."

For a moment he buried his face in his hands. Then he rose. His face was the color of his linen.

"Shall we return?" he asked.

She took his arm, and very pale, with a heart of pain and bitterness, she mounted with him to the ballroom.

XIII

One decision Mildred made irrevocably: she would at the first possible moment give notice to Clara and the Countess; she would leave this house as soon as she decently could, and tomorrow she would be back in the life to which she

belonged.

While Mildred was watching her opportunity to get word to Clara and the Countess, Mrs. Dean was summoned from her guests down to the big sitting room on the first floor. Awaiting her here was a gentleman of solid proportions, whose face gave the sense of being composed of equal parts of black brows and profound mystery. To Mrs. Dean this gentleman made certain statements and showed certain articles.

Mrs. Dean's lofty face took on a look

of triumph. It was not a very delicate thing that she had authorized this man to do, but Mrs. Dean was one of those beings to whom the end justifies the means; and it had long been the habit of this rather obtuse autocrat to ignore or override any custom or courtesy that was a barrier to her desire. The king can do no wrong—Mrs. Dean still believed in that doctrine, at least in so far as it applied to Mrs. Dean.

She now thought rapidly—and exult-This was her great chance to attach the Countess more firmly to herself, and to improve the chances of her son. That her house was full of guests was no deterrent to her. She had to act quickly, for the Countess had said that she was soon to leave Norton. There would probably be no other occasion when all the tools of her triumph would be so dramatically convenient to her hand.

She rang a bell. A footman instantly appeared. Mrs. Dean gave forth her

mandate:

"Find the Countess D'Autreval, Mrs. Raymond, Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Philip, and ask them to come here at once."

The footman bowed and vanished. Mrs. Dean, glancing casually out of the window, which included the portecochère within its view, saw a sight which sent her precipitately from the room. It was Mildred, her wraps on, going down the steps toward an automobile, accompanied by Jack Raymond.

"Countess D'Autrevall" Mrs. Dean called from the doorway.

Mildred turned.

"Countess, surely you are not leaving

so soon!"

"I looked for you to say good night, but could not find you," said Mildred. "I am not feeling quite myself. But I am not robbing you of a second guest. for Mr. Raymond is coming back.

"But, Countess, there is something very important that I wish to tell you."

"Can it not wait till tomorrow?" Tomorrow she would be where she would never have to speak to this woman again.

"It could, perhaps—but now is the best time. Besides, it need take only a

minute."

Mildred could hardly persist in refusing, so she with Jack Raymond followed her hostess into the sitting room. Here in the meantime had gathered Clara, Philip Dean and the Countess; and all of them were looking with curious eyes at the heavy gentleman with the black brows and face of corpulent mystery.

Mrs. Dean took her stand beside a table, with a demeanor that would have done credit to the chairlady of a convention of queens, empresses, czarinas and sultanas. She spoke with the delibera-

tion of the superwoman.

"I have before me a very painful duty"—she had never enjoyed anything more—"a duty that has been brought upon me by the necessity of protecting the guest who has been honoring us." Here she gave Mildred the sun of her smile. "I have just discovered proof of a most scandalous imposition that has been practised upon us all, and of which the Countess has been especially the victim. It is my duty to expose the perpetrator—"

"Don't go on, I beg of you," interrupted Mildred, whose greatest desire was to get out of this situation and

away.

"Don't say any more!" exclaimed Clara Raymond, who began to glimpse whither this exposé might lead.

The eyes of the irrepressible Frenchwoman had begun to dance. "Please go

on—please!" she cried.

"If you go on, Mrs. Dean," warned Mildred, "you may be the one to suffer most from the consequences."

Mrs. Dean gave Mildred a puzzled

look.

"I do not understand, Countess. But I must go on. It is my duty. Mr. Grady, will you please tell us what you know about Mrs. Harrison?"

The black-browed gentleman rose, two

hundredweight of confidence.

"Mr. Grady is a detective," briefly explained Mrs. Dean; whereat Mr. Grady bowed.

"I don't know's I need tell very much," he said. "Traced the lady here

back to Newport. Gave her name there as Mrs. Grayson. Stayed at a small hotel. Proprietor said she had acted very suspicious. Couldn't find out where she came from. She hasn't been mugged at New York headquarters, but she's a slick one, all right."

Jack Raymond and Philip Dean stared amazed at the Countess. Mrs. Dean eyed her with ominous sternness.

"Do you claim that 'Mrs. Harrison' is your real name?" demanded Mrs.

Dean.

The Countess was a-sparkle with delight.

"I do not."

"Are you willing to confess who you are?"

The Countess laughed outright.

"Thank you for your invitation, Mrs. Dean. But not at present."

Mrs. Dean's face grew more stern at

this levity.

"Very well. Proceed with your evidence, Mr. Brady."

"At Mrs. Dean's request, I have just gone through Mrs. Harrison's belongings—"

"Mother, you did that?" cried Philip,

a sudden flush in his face.

"It was to protect and save the Countess," Mrs. Dean calmly explained.

There was a bright glitter in the Countess's eyes. She made a bow to Mrs. Dean.

"My compliments to you, madame. Madame would make a most admirable

sneak thief."

Mrs. Dean looked at her wrathfully, but did not reply.

"Continue, Mr. Grady."

"I did not find the necklace that Mrs. Dean has missed," he went on, with the calm confidence of the man who knows he is never wrong; "but I certainly have found the person who knows where that necklace is. I found a lot of jewelry she never could have come by honestly—stuff she picked up in big houses she's been around." He paused a moment for stage effect, then loosed his climax: "Some of it had on it the name of the Countess D'Autreval!"

Mrs. Dean turned to Mildred. "Did

you give that jewelry to her?"

"She did not," quickly spoke up the

Countess.

"Then we hardly need to pursue the matter further at present," said Mrs. Dean. "You admit that the name you use is assumed. You admit that the jewelry was not given you by the Count-Your own admissions force me to declare now, and I shall declare it publicly tomorrow, that you are nothing but an imposter, an adventuress, and God alone knows what else! I should order your arrest, but I shall content myself with asking you, Miss or Mrs. Whoevervou-are, to leave my house at once."

The Countess stepped forward and

made a deep and graceful bow.

"Madame is so very much like"—she gave Mrs. Dean a mocking, brilliant smile-"like herself!"

Mrs. Dean glowered.

"Be careful, or you'll not get off so easily. Now go!"

The Countess bowed again.

"I never left a house with so much pleasure. But before I gratify myself by going, allow me to tell madame that she is the greatest snob that ever lived!"

"You—you—" gasped Mrs. Dean.

"And utterly selfish, and utterly without heart!" She turned and flashed a bright look upon Mildred-a look of madcap mischief. "And let me warn you, Countess: Mrs. Dean is trying to capture you for her son."

This was too much.

"Mr. Grady—arrest her!" Mrs. Dean choked out.

Mr. Grady was very deft at his calling, and before one could draw a second breath a pair of steel bracelets encircled the Countess's fair wrists.

"Now, officer, take her away!" cried Mrs. Dean. "We'll find out who she is, and we'll give her what she deserves!"

The Countess's half-angry, mocking, delighted smile disappeared. whimsical daring she had not foreseen this twist to the situation. Here was a predicament indeed! She turned slowly about to Mildred.

"If I stay arrested," she whispered, "then it will become generally public who I am, and Mr. Gilmore's process server may not make the same mistake

again."

Mildred's bitterness, her anger toward Mrs. Dean, had been swelling with every instant. She was now reckless.

"I see your danger. Go ahead." The Countess turned to Mrs. Dean.

"Perhaps you might prefer that I should not be arrested if you were to find out who I am."

"Oh, I shall find out who you are!" was Mrs. Dean's grim reply. "For that matter, I know already."

"But you may be mistaken. Perhaps

I am not what you think."

"You'll have your chance to prove that to the police," sneered Mrs. Dean.

"Perhaps you might prefer, for your own sake, that I should prove it now."

The steady note in the Countess's voice caused Mrs. Dean to eye the prisoner sharply. But instantly she decided that the Countess was bluffing. and instantly she decided to call the bluff.

"Very well—prove it!"

The Countess thought a moment, then smiled in the direction of Mr. Grady.

"Did the detective gentleman by chance come upon a leather case containing a few letters?"

"I believe I did," said Mr. Grady. Her next inquiry was directed to Mrs.

"May the detective gentleman be permitted to rummage among my things again and bring these letters down?"

Mrs. Dean hesitated, then consented. A moment afterward the detective reappeared with a small leather case. This, at the Countess's request, he first handed to Mildred.

"Will my friend examine this case and tell me if she ever saw it before?"

"I never did," said Mildred.

"Will the gentleman please hand these letters to madame?" And when Mr. Grady had done so, she added: "Will madame please examine my proofs?"

With a lofty indifference Mrs. Dean began to read the inscriptions on the envelopes. One seemed to startle her somewhat. She quickly drew out the sheet of notepaper, and glanced over it.

Then suddenly she turned a sickly gray, and looked at the Countess with eyes that were staring wide.

"This is a letter—introducing you—

to me," she gasped.

"Madame read it correctly."
"What! You are the—the—"

"The Countess D'Autreval," the

other supplied sweetly.

Slowly Mrs. Dean sank into her chair—and stared. Jack and Philip also stared.

But in a moment Mrs. Dean was on her feet again. This time her gaze was directed on Mildred.

"If she is the Countess, then who are you?" she demanded.

"Exactly who I told you I was at first," was Mildred's calm reply—"Gertrude Quayle."

"Who are you—what are you?"

"My last position," said Mildred evenly, "was as a model in the French gown department of Weber & Mikelham's."

"A dress model!" gasped Mrs. Dean. There was a moment of silence—dazed, sickly, on the part of Mrs. Dean. In that silence the six heard a soft exclamation come from the lower end of the room. They turned quickly and saw what in their engrossment they had not before noted—that the door from the second sitting room had been quietly opened a few inches, and in the aperture appeared several eager faces, among them that of Mr. Cartwright Dexter.

Seeing that they were discovered, Mr. Dexter stepped quickly through the door. "What!" he cried to Mildred. "You're a dress model—and yet you've been making all these swells down here believe you were the Countess?"

"Leave the room immediately!" commanded Mrs. Dean with faint dignity.

Jack and Philip advanced upon the intruders, and the latter retreated. "Oh, lordy, fellows—what a story!" gasped Dexter as the door shut them out.

Mrs. Dean's eyes went back to Mildred, and they filled with a deepening

horror.

"A dress model!" she moaned. "And I've been entertaining you as the Countess!"

Mildred's bitterness had grown momentarily more acute.

"Pray, do not accuse yourself too strongly, for you really have not been so

very entertaining."

"And I have—you have—" A new terror had come into her face, and she almost choked. "Tell me, have you taken advantage of my son?"

"What could I do, Mrs. Dean, when

you threw him at my head?"

"What—have you dared—have you

—have you—"

"Your son has done me the honor to ask me to marry him, if that is what you wish to ask."

"You? And you?"

"And I have done myself the honor to refuse."

Mrs. Dean looked quickly at her son, whose face was pale and strained.

"Is that so?"

His white lips parted.

"It is."

Mrs. Dean gasped and stared—and gasped. "Thank God!" she said fer-

vently.

Mildred quivered with the desire to give all the torture that she could. "But you are not safe enough yet to give thanks. For if it should ever get out—if these reporters should print it—that the proud and exclusive Mrs. Dean had thrown her son at a department store model, what would the world say?"

The thrust reached the heart of Mrs.

Dean's pride.

"Heavens!" she gasped. "That must

never happen!"

She caught the back of her chair, swayed uncertainly and looked wildly about her. Her eyes settled on Clara. She seemed to recall something. She straightened up, and a degree of her old confidence returned to her.

"We shall take immediate steps to head off any such report, Miss Quayle," she said with a shadow of her old dignity. "Clara, Philip—a short time since you asked my permission for your marriage. I then had objections. I have changed my mind. We shall announce your engagement tonight."

"No, thank you!" said Clara.

"What's the matter?" cried Mrs.

"I've changed my mind, too."

Philip had stepped toward her with an eagerness he could not suppress.

"What-you don't want to marry

me?"

"I—I hope you don't mind, Philip—"
"What does this mean?" ragefully

demanded Mrs. Dean.

Clara had turned an embarrassed crimson. "I—I—" she stammered, then seemed unable to get out any more, and looked guiltily, helplessly, up at Jack.

He came to the rescue.

"The fact is—well, you see, Clara demanded that we should keep it an absolute secret for a while. She was afraid that everybody would laugh at us. But there's no help for it now. The fact is, Mrs. Dean"—he had slipped his left arm about Clara—"the fact is, we were married over again this afternoon."

"Married!" ejaculated Mrs. Dean, and again sank weakly into her chair.

"Oh, Clara!" cried Mildred, her personal bitterness for the moment all forgotten. "I'm so glad!" And she flung her arms about Clara's neck.

"Jack, congratulations, old man!" cried Philip, gripping the other's hand.

"Clara, I'm mighty glad!"

Mrs. Dean gazed at this scene with gray face and a jaw that for once swung loosely in its socket. Then her wavering gaze took in the Countess, standing slightly apart from the others.

"Countess," she quavered, "I hope you will forgive and forget this—this unfortunate affair, and give me the honor

of continuing to be my guest."

"I shall forgive if"—she smilingly raised her wrists, still imprisoned by the handcuffs—"if Monsieur Lecocq will be so kind as to remove his pretty trinkets."

Mr. Grady did so.

"But madame can hardly expect me to forget," the Countess continued sweetly. "And as for her hospitality, I hope madame will excuse me, but I vastly prefer our relations as they are." And she made a very pretty bow.

Mrs. Dean seemed to wilt still deeper

into her chair.

"Let's go," said Mildred briefly.

They started out. At the door Mildred paused and gave a backward look at Philip Dean—who had proposed to her, not because she was herself, but because he thought she was the Countess; at Mrs. Dean, that queen of all snobs, who had come near expiring from pure horror at learning she had entertained a woman who worked for her living. And Mildred thought of her father. Her bitterness surged up passionate, uncontrollable.

"I know what you think of me, Mrs. Dean," she flamed out; "and let me tell you that I do not care! And let me tell you that the contempt you feel for me is but the merest nerve flutter compared to the contempt I feel for you. Mrs. Dean, there is no more despicable human creature than the woman who lives wholly on others, who does nothing, who devotes her fortune, her own life and the lives of others to the sole and consuming purpose of improving her social standing!" She turned her fire upon Philip. "And what I have said applies equally to you, Philip Dean!"

He was paler than anyone she had ever seen, but he did not speak. Nor did

his mother.

"And as a last word," Mildred went on, "perhaps I might as well tell you who I am. I am Mildred Grantley."

"Mildred Grantley!" exclaimed Philip

Dean

"Mildred Grantley!" came quavering from the loose lips of Mrs. Dean.

"Mildred Grantley. And she wishes

you both a very good evening."

She gave them each a low, ironic bow, then turned and walked past the others out of the room. From the Countess there bubbled up a laugh of impish ecstasy:

"Oh, won't it be simply gorgeous for

my book!"

XIV

As Mildred passed through the door a young gentleman with excitement in his eyes interrupted her. Behind him were others similarly eager.

"Pardon me," said Mr. Cartwright Dexter, with the manner and the insinuating courtesy of a diplomat—"pardon us, but we could not help hearing you say that you were Mildred Grantley. Would you object to giving us a few words about yourself?"

"I have nothing to say," declared Mil-

dred.

"I will say this much about her," put in the sparkling Countess: "Miss Grantley is a very great actress."

"Indeed! Miss Grantley, will you

not--"

"No, I will not!" And with Jack and Clara she pressed her way through the newspaper men out to the waiting motor.

The Countess, who remained behind to pack, smilingly refused to say another word; also Mrs. Dean and her son, who seemed to be having a serious talk between themselves, would say nothing. There was none of the usual reportorial persistence, for they had barely time to catch the last train that would land them in town in time to write their stories; and so they vanished.

In the motor Mildred again congratulated Clara and Jack; after which she announced that she was returning to New York that very night. They urged her to remain until morning, at least, but she was immovable; she was not going to stay in Norton a single moment

longer than was necessary.

At half past one Jack and Clara set Mildred down at the little Norton station. A slow, chill rain had begun to fall. She was dressed in the slightly worn gray suit she had had on that morning when she had been a suppliant in Huxheim's office; and her sole baggage was a small bag loaned by Clara—in which rested her total fortune, ten dollars. The dark, the drizzle and the loneliness depressed her spirits yet farther. For her, this midsummer comedy, so blithely entered into, had drawn to a grim and heavy close. The curtain had been rung down. The lights were out. All was over.

The whistle of the train sounded. She bade good-bye to Jack and Clara, who found it difficult to suppress the happiness of their brand new second honeymoon. Her attention taken by the parting, she had not seen a motor speed up to the station, nor had she seen a trunk

flung hastily into the baggage car; and so she was more than a little surprised when the Countess stepped into her coach.

They took a seat together. "Where are you going?" Mildred inquired.

"Back to France," smiled the Count-

"Indeed!"

"On the Amerika—it sails early in the morning." The Countess showed her even white teeth in a rippling laugh. "Mr. Wendell Gilmore will know his mistake tomorrow, and so will his process server. I think the bosom of the broad Atlantic will be the most comfortable place for me."

They chatted on, the Countess entertainingly, Mildred perfunctorily, for her thoughts were elsewhere, till they reached New York. The Countess kissed her good-bye warmly, urged her to visit her whenever she came to France, and then rolled away in a taxicab, first to the Plaza Hotel to order her trunks, which had remained there, to be carried to the steamer, and afterward to the Amerika, where it was her purpose to keep herself locked securely in her stateroom till after the ocean giant was safely down the bay.

Left alone, Mildred knew hardly what to do. She could not return to her old boarding house at such an hour. Finally she decided to go to a hotel—and half an hour later she was in bed in a tiny room some twenty-odd stories in the air.

But she did not sleep. The bitterness in her heart would not allow her. Her mind kept turning ever to Philip Dean, that dilettante in love and drama—who had been led on to propose to her by the lustrous glory of her borrowed title. As if she were not as good as any count-ess that ever breathed! And his mother—his proud, tuft hunting snob of a mother! She writhed at the thought of them.

But Mildred was a sane and healthy person, with her share of one of heaven's choicest gifts, a sense of humor; and for these last several years life had not presented itself to her as a prettily patterned romance, but as a very workaday affair. She had more important business than luxuriating in bitter thoughts and brooding over a man she loved and who had made love to her imaginary title. She had before her the very important business of living a life and getting bread and butter. And this bread and butter business was distressingly urgent; it loomed before her mountainous in its menace, for by the morning, so she calculated, her fortune would have ebbed to a bare seven dollars.

She banished the bitterness and forced her mind to center upon material affairs. What should she do? There was only one possible thing to do—to begin on the morrow a tour of the offices of managers and actors' agents. She sighed as she thought of that dreary march from office to office—offices in which courtesy, as far as her knowledge went, was a lost art, or perhaps an art that never had been found.

But presently, as she lay there in her dark, high-placed loneliness, a bold thought came to her. She smiled, and her heart grew warm with amusement. The idea was absurd, of course, but there might be some fun in trying it. Soothed by the humor of the thought, after a time she drifted off into sleep.

It was ten o'clock when she awoke. She dressed hurriedly, paid for her room at the hotel, carried her bag to the Grand Central Station, where she checked it, and took a cup of coffee at a dairy lunchroom—after which she walked through a cross street to Broadway, was shot upward by an elevator and stepped out into a corridor cut with a dozen doors or more, on the glazing of each of which was painted in bold black letters, "Samuel Huxheim, Inc."

Her purpose was to apply to Mr. Huxheim for a job. She wondered how he would take it.

Her heat thumping, she opened the door marked "Entrance." The pasty-faced youth in the green uniform looked up from his paper.

"Well?" said he indifferently.
"I'd like to see Mr. Huxheim."

"Got an appointment?"

"No."

"Afraid you can't see him then. He's rushed to death this morning."

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"At least give him my card and ask him."

The blase youth took the bit of pasteboard without looking at it and disappeared through the magic door of opportunity. Mildred started to sit down, but before she could do so the golden door reopened.

"Go right in," said he of the pimply countenance.

Mildred stepped into the big airy room, with its thick green rug and glossy mahogany furniture—and over the desk the autographed photos of stage and prize ring heroes. At the desk sat the great Huxheim, a derby hat on his round head, a cigar in his mouth, busily scratching the Huxheim signature to letter after letter.

Mildred, hardly breathing, waited for him to look up. Scratch, scratch, went the pen—and suddenly across her consciousness scratched the thought that she had only yesterday refused that pudgy scribbling hand in marriage.

"Miss Grantley?" he mumbled at length.

"Yes."

Suddenly his cigar went from his mouth and his hat from his head, and he was on his feet, gripping one of Mildred's hands. As for his face—"well, there was about a thousand dollars' worth of grin on it," as she afterward said.

"Say," he cried, "you're the best

ever!"

"What-what-"

"Countess D'Autreval! Say, you did it to beat the band! And the way those society topliners fell for it! And me, too, for that matter."

Perhaps her greatest surprise at this moment was to see that Sam Huxheim could be pleasant—despite legends she had heard to this effect.

"Then you don't hold any grudge—"
"Grudge? Nothing. Though you certainly did slip one across on Sam Huxheim. Good Lord, the way that pedigreed bunch at Norton—" But his sentence was choked off by a fit of guttural laughter. "Sit down—sit down," he managed to say at length.

She did so, still very much dazed by

this unexpected reception.

"I suppose you got one of my tele-

grams?"

"Your telegrams?" she asked blankly.
"Yes; I telegraphed to your old New
York address and to Norton just as soon
as I saw the papers—" Her look made
him stop abruptly. "You don't mean
to say you haven't seen the papers
yet?"

"I've only been up half an hour."

"What! Oh, Lord!" He stared at her; then a short arm shot forward and took something from a pigeonhole. "Here then—suppose you look at this paper first."

She took the sheet he held out to her. A glance at it, and she looked at him

breathless.

"Why—why, this is a contract to play Mary Winters in 'The Golden Spoon'!"

"I see you have at least a common school education," said Huxheim.

"You're—you're in earnest?" she

breathed.

"Ain't that what I've been telegraphing to you for?" He laid a short fore-finger on a spot in the contract. "That's where you sign."

She asked no more questions, but with a wild, swirling happiness she affixed her

name.

Then she remembered something. "But how about Trixie Morton?"

"Oh, I'm taking care of her in another show. Now, how quick can you learn your lines?"

"I know them."

"You don't say! Good; then I'll take you right over to the Longacre Theater, where we're rehearing this morning."

He pushed one of the many buttons on his desk. Instantly a sharp-faced dapper young denizen of Broadway ap-

peared.

"Jake," said Huxheim excitedly, "get the dope out to all the papers that we've just signed up Mildred Grantley for the woman lead in 'The Golden Spoon.' And rearrange the booking like I was saying: try-out at Atlantic City tomorrow night, and open here the night after. That'll get us into New York to get the full value of all the publicity about Miss Grantley." Huxheim

slapped his lieutenant exultantly on the shoulder. "By George, Jake, it will simply make the show!"

"Was there er much publicity?"
Mildred queried faintly when Jake had

vanished.

"Much publicity!" Huxheim stared at her; then again came the muffled eruption of guttural laughs. "Mildred Grantley plays Countess D'Autreval before the exclusives of Norton, takes 'em all in, becomes the pet of society—with the real Countess playing second woman. Publicity! Child, it's the biggest story of the kind in years. Here, look at the papers!"

The newspapers Huxheim handed Mildred almost took away her breath. Mr. Cartwright Dexter and his colleagues had certainly done their duty. First page—big headlines—something like two or three yards of text. If these daily historians were to be believed, certainly there had never before been any-

thing quite like it.

Mildred's artistic honor was touched. "And you engaged me—just because of this publicity?" she asked with a sinking

at the heart.

"That'll help, and don't you overlook that bet!" cried Huxheim. "Mrs. Pat Campbell and her pink pup never got space like that. But also you must remember, Miss Grantley"—there was a twinkle in the Huxheim eye—"that I've had a chance to see that you were some actress."

Mildred was partially appeased. But she could not keep down the cynical reflections. She was no better actress now than she had been a fortnight since, when she had sat unwelcomed in Huxheim's outer office. It was a pretty state that this her profession had fallen into when honest work had not advanced her—when advancement had come to her only through accident and notoriety.

Still, her chance had come! And she felt within herself the power to make

good.

That was a day of rush and grind and excitement—a day of solid rehearsing, broken only by a few minutes' pause for the coffee and sandwiches brought in from a nearby restaurant, and by the

appearance of a theatrical photographer to get pictures of her for the press agent's use. She got through her lines with little prompting, and despite her agitation she threw herself into her part as though she had been Mary Winters all her life. Huxheim, who was often in consultation with someone in the rear of the theater, was several times at pains to praise her work; and several times he expressed his sense of the improvement in the play since its key had been changed from farce to straight comedy.

Mildred thought she was happy—and much of the time she was indeed tingling with the artist's exultant delight at doing the thing he loves. But behind her exultation there was a vague, numb pain, a sense of something lacking. There was no time for self-diagnosis, but she dimly felt that what was wrong was that she was still saturated with the bitterness of her recent experiences. Time and hard work and success, if it came, would set

her right again.

She did not know definitely what was the matter until she came out of the theater at five. At the end of the narrow high-walled alley that led from the stage door to the street, a young man was standing—as though waiting. He raised his hat, and hesitatingly held out his hand.

"Are you willing to be friends, Miss

Grantley?" he asked quietly.

Her heart nearly jumped out of her at sight of Philip Dean. She searched his face. It was pale, rather tense—and met her gaze with a steady, straightforward sincerity.

"You are certain you wish to be friends—after all that has happened?"

she asked.

"I wish it more than anything else," he said.

She gave him her hand.

"Have you a little time?" he asked.
"We rehearse again tonight. I'm free

till then."

"Where shall I take you? Where do you live?"

"Nowhere," she said, with a little

laugh.

"Nowhere! Then suppose we go over to Bryant Park." They started eastward through a cross street.

"I saw you act today," he remarked.

"Oh!"

"You did Mary Winters to perfection.

It is a new play with you in it."

His praise set something flaming and leaping within her heart. That, with his quiet gentlemanliness, with not a word of reproach, made her burn with a sudden shame.

"I know you must despise me for what I have done," she began hurriedly.

"And I want to apologize—"

"Do not apologize," he interrupted, in his quiet, restrained tone. "And do not explain. Clara has told me everything. Besides, there is no need for you to apologize. I want to thank you for what you have done."

"Thank me?" She looked at him in

surprise.

He gazed at her very steadily. "If you had not done what you did, I should

not have known you."

Her eyes fell, and she flushed. They entered the park in silence and sat down with the great white library at their backs.

He resumed: "Also I must thank you for helping me."

"Helping you? How?"

"Partly by things you have said. They woke me up. They have helped me to a decision. Miss Grantley, I have a confession to make—though in fairness to myself I must say that I have not been such an idler as you have supposed. I have been-well, weak. I was brought up amid certain very definite conventions. I did not break through them and out into the real world because—well, partly, I suppose, because I was weak partly because I had grown up under the dominance of my mother and hesitated to displease her—and partly because I thought that, for the time being, I could do what I wanted to do without facing the crisis of a breach." He was silent a moment. "But the break has come."

"With your mother?" she asked

quickly.

"Yes. We had it out last night. And I am out in the world now—the same as you are."

"How did your mother take it?"

"She said little. I do not know how she'll regard it in the end. But I think she is a much changed woman."

A moment of silence followed. His gaze was fixed unwaveringly upon her, and he held her eyes as though she were fascinated.

He bent nearer her, his voice lowered. "There was also another thing I told

She wanted to drop her eyes, but could not.

"Yes?"

"I told her that when I said I loved you last night I meant it."

"Oh!"

"And Mildred"—he spoke her name with a quaver—"I still mean it."

She could not speak.

He stretched out a tense trembling hand to her.

"And you, Mildred? You?"

There was no hesitating, no wavering on her part. She was a woman, and knew her woman's soul; and she was not one to coquette with her miracle when that miracle had come to pass. With a dizzy uprush of happiness she gave him a straight, open gaze from her eyes, and laid her hand in his and gripped it tightly.

"Yes," she whispered.

"Mildred!" he exclaimed. "Mildred!"

They held hands and gazed with glowing eyes at one another. There was little else that they could do in this crowded breathing spot of the masses.

However, after a moment they perceived that they were attracting the curious gaze of passers-by. They rose and left the park, her hand close within his

As they walked westward, his joyous expanding mind seemed to recall some-

thing besides their love, and his face began to flush with an added excitement—a strange, new excitement. Her quick eyes noted the change.

"What is it?" she breathed.

"There is something else to tell you, Mildred," he answered unsteadily. "It seems that I have always been interested in plays. I have studied them for years, and I must have written a dozen—secretly. I have worked hard, Mildred—hard—as a real worker. And at last one of them— Look!"

He stretched out a trembling hand toward the top of a house on the opposite side of Sixth Avenue. They paused in mid-street. It was really a rather commonplace matter that he pointed out, merely a large billboard which said:

THE GOLDEN SPOON A Comedy in Three Acts by JOHN MAITLAND

Beside the billboard stood a man in white drill overalls and jumper. He dipped his brush into a paste bucket, ran the pasty brush across the name of John Maitland, then with a deft sweep of his brush he slapped a narrow strip of paper upon the board—and lo, "John Maitland" was no more and "Philip Dean" was in his stead. After which the billposter mechanically picked up brush and bucket and shuffled away.

Mildred clutched Philip's arm. Her eyes were suddenly flushed with tears.

"Is—is that so?"

His eyes, too, were wet. He nodded.

"Oh, Philip!"

Whereupon the blasé crowd that surges past the corner at Fortieth Street and Sixth Avenue was presented with a somewhat curious spectacle—a city's traffic being held up while an emotional young woman threw arms about a very emotional young man.



IT takes sometimes but one wrong letter to change a man from a force to a farce in politics.

THE WOMAN IN THE MIRROR

By Elinor Mordaunt

N the shoulder of one of the Island Mountains is to be seen a huge crag of gray stone, cut with deep indigo shadows and splashed at the base with the vivid scarlet of flamboyant trees, which is like nothing so much as a crouching lion. From this the green cane patches slope unbroken to the white sands and the blue sea, with its fringe of foam above the reef. All is brilliant and hard and clear cut, even the very shadows failing to give any impression of rest or coolness.

But once the winding road dips round by the monster's flanks, it reaches a new world, a world of shadows. The trees are thick and wide spreading, with curious twisted stems and boughs, so closely interlaced that it is always twilight beneath their shade; the hanging creepers are starred with pale, sweet-scented blossoms, the tree trunks splashed with mottled, tawny orchids and the air moist with the breath of many streams. It is a place where one's instinct is to speak in a whisper, almost as if one were in a sacred building, and to start at any sudden rustle of leaf or fall of broken bough.

A man topped the lion's back, stepping gingerly in his worn shoes on the sun-baked rock, and with a sigh of relief reached the deep shadow at its far side.

Smeared with dust and sweat, with worn shoes, out-at-elbow suit of gray flannels and battered sun helmet, he had looked a sufficiently forlorn figure in the blaze of sunshine to the right of the crouching beast; but among the luxuriant masses of tropical growth he had appeared, with his bloodshot, furtive eyes and haggard, unshaven face, like some cynical jest at civilization. If the man had been a naked savage the forest

would have seemed in a manner to clothe him, to make him part of itself; but from the poorest of creatures, a poor white, it appeared to stand apart in a sort of splendid scorn.

Almost mechanically, as it seemed, he moved down the winding path, unobservant of the beauties that surrounded him, but glancing sharply back at any sudden sound with the look of a man to whom the idea of pursuit has grown to be an obsession more than an actual fear; till he at length reached a little native village where the forest ended brokenly in patches of manioc and fern.

There lay a tiny white Catholic church and the Padre's house and a Hindoo temple, with fluttering flags before it, and some twoscore grass-thatched native huts; beside this, one other bungalow, buried in a mass of neglected creepers, that had pulled down the greater part of the veranda posts with them, and a garden, a riot of unpruned hibiscus and weed-grown paths.

The stranger's decision seemed to hesitate with wavering glances between the prim parsonage and the other bungalow; then, with the cynical reflection that the latter was the most suited both to his disposition and present appearance, he pushed back the unwilling little gate and passed up the path. The veranda was indescribably untidy, seeming as if some incapable housewife had for years swept all the dust and debris from the house into it and left it there to accumulate. Its sole occupant was a small naked black boy, who sat on the floor playing with a little pile of pebbles and flower heads, and whose only reply to the stranger's inquiries as to who lived there was a solemn unflinching stare from a pair of

large, liquid dark eyes, beautiful and melancholy as those of a deer. Still it was evident that someone was within, for a voice called to him in French from the room beyond bidding him enter. Picking his way across the littered veranda, he paused a moment at the open French window, then, as no one appeared to greet him, stepped into the room beyond.

A stranger room could hardly have been seen. Its atmosphere was of a subdued golden dimness, combined of sunshine filtering through green leaves and the dust-laden air. Apparently it ran the whole length of the house, while down the middle of it was a dark, heavy, carved oak table, with great curved and bossed legs. This was heaped at the far end, where an Indian woman bent over a charcoal brazier, with dirty pots and pans and dishes; set in the middle with several plates, also dirty, arranged on a newspaper; and nearer the window, where the wanderer had entered, massed with books and papers, interspersed with cigarette ends and sundry articles of attire. At that end of the room against the wall stood a bed draped in mosquito netting, and between that and the table. in a great carved chair, which might have graced the sanctuary of some cathedral. sat an old man in a faded dressing gown, who wished him good evening, apologized for not rising and asked the wanderer to be seated, speaking in the purest Parisian of fifty years before, and with all the suavity of one who receives an honored and long expected guest.

There was something extraordinarily restful to the jarred nerves of the stranger in this calm acceptance of his presence, this unquestioning courtesy. The very immovability of the old man, as he sat with his long white hands on the carved arms of his chair, seemed as peaceful as fate. There was no doubt that he was very, very old. His face was like wrinkled parchment; even his white hair seemed to have been worn to the merest silken threads by the passing of time; only the sunken gray eyes were still in their expression incredibly young, cynical, amused, tolerant and yet bright

with some strange hope.

The Indian woman was called and tea served in priceless Sèvres cups-the tea of the district, insipid as hay and water. but as much nectar to the exhausted man as the sodden bread and guava jelly was a food fit for the gods.

"You will stay for the night—that goes without saying," remarked the old man, as he offered his guest a cigarette and lighted one himself. "I have not, unhappily, another bed; but there is the couch, and Arica will arrange a mosquito curtain over it and find you some

pillows."

The stranger flicked an ash off his cigarette with a long white finger and lifted his eyes with an effort to meet those of his host. He was quite unaware himself of how palpable the effort of meeting another man's eye must appear: it was indeed a real physical agony to him, all the more unendurable because it was so new; only a year ago he had been able to meet anyone's eye with his own, laughing and insolent, and would have punished the shadow of distrust with a blow. But a year is a long time; it is almost incredible how old, how sad, how bad one can become in a year, and how quickly one grows not to resent, but only to fear, suspicion.

"You do not know my name; it is

Daudenet—Henri Daudenet."

The old man bowed politely, then smiled, and the stranger flushed. The smile was perfectly well bred, yet so tolerant that it said as plainly as words could have done: "Why, yes, certainly, if it pleases you, my good man. It is a lie, but what matter? Why not Daudenet as well as any other name?"

"That is lie number one," said the "Monsieur, I find myself bestranger. coming a prude in my fear of the naked truth. It is Du Poisson—ah, yes, Henri -still Henri. And will you take me in now? I have no luggage, no credentials

of any sort."

"My dear sir, we none of us have any luggage for the one most important journey of our life, that with which it ends. You are tired and nerve-racked. Pippa will show you a little pond among the trees at the garden's end, where you can bathe; then Arica will have an omelette

ready for our supper; she can cook—ah, yes." And he called to the tiny boy on the veranda, who trotted off before Du Poisson down the tangled path to the palm-shaded pool, returning later with a fine lawn shirt of monsieur's, clean

though yellow with age.

Over the cigarettes and glass of thin red wine after supper he told the old man his story. A commonplace enough recital; the wild, free life of a Parisian art student—the inevitable mistress. more ambitious and also more greedy than the usual model or blanchisseuse; the rich relation; the chequebook left so carelessly at hand; a writing where flourishes took the place of character, ridiculously easy for the best black and white student of De Bordier's studio to And, after all, there was so imitate. much money, by rights almost his. Then the champagne dinner he and Clarice had given to their friends; and after that the flight—that flight that made him tremble at a falling twig, that reduced him to the level of a wild animal, watching the world as it watches the eye of its captor; the remorseless pursuit of the law, inspired by the man he had robbed—the more inexorable because even then Clarice would not look at him, in spite of his money. There was some good in her, after all. Ah, yes, there always is in the worst women; it is the stainless ones who are most often the utterly inhuman.

And so on, from Paris to London. from London to Nice, to Marseilles, to Ceylon. Then to Bourbon, surely a place forgotten of the whole world—and yet there the iron law and its officers and the actual papers of extradition. Even there on the very quay the final mad struggle, the race for freedom, the agonized uncertainty and thirst of the two long days and nights among the scrub of the water's edge. Then the rough coasting steamer with its kindly master, and at last the island, the furtive dart on shore, the dodging of white faces in the malodorous back streets of the little port. The long white road, miles and miles of it, straight along the coast, then winding up the mountainside over the lion's back, and— A shrug of the shoulders, a gesture of the hands, said: "Here, monsieur, and at your mercy."

"Monsieur du Poisson," said the old man very courteously, all mockery gone from his voice, "I need not tell you that you and your secret are alike safe here, at the world's end. And if you had ever lived as I have for nearly fifty years, crippled and alone, far from the world you once loved, you would not need my assurance that I welcome anyone who comes from that world as I would welcome an angel, equally whether he were black or white. Stay here as long as you will. The world forgets easily—we are each, in truth, so unimportant—and it forgets most easily the sinner who him-

self forgets the sin."

"I, too, fled from my own world, having sinned the one sin that Paris never forgives, that of loving my own wife too well. That she should have a lover, that perhaps is a compliment to our taste; we may wink at it, but we must let the world see that we wink and are by no means so innocent as to be deceived. I did not act the part I was cast for in the comedy—besides, I killed one man. But, ma foi, I couldn't go on killing. She took our child with her, and—well, every eye in Paris seemed to say, 'I could have told you so.' Besides, my father had left me estates out here. She has been dead now for thirty years, and the child, too, is dead. But-monsieur, you will think I am a mad old man, a senile dreamer, perhaps—but now my wife is my own again, after all the long years, nay, mine as she never was before. I still believe that I held, as no other man ever held, her very heart and soul; for the lovely body was all they knew. And now the soul is triumphant, and by suffering and death all the dross of that body is purged away, as mine will be, beyond the barrier where youth is eternal. Strike a match, monsieur; there is a lamp somewhere on the table among all that debris. Ah, yes, Arica is dirty and untidy, but then she is honest, and my comparative poverty holds vet possessions that would be worth the stealing. The light—now, see here!"

It was a miniature that the old man held in the palm of his hand, rather larger than such things usually are, and set in sapphires. It was a curiously posed figure, showing the back of a woman, a mass of bright brown hair piled high, a little ear, the tender curve of a cheek, the long, smooth neck and shoulders lightly draped in white—in truth, the most provocative and beautiful aspect of a beautiful woman.

"You tell me you are an artist," said the old man; "will you paint a picture of her for me—not in payment of what poor hospitality I can give you, but for the sake of the country that we both love? Paint her full face with its sparkling blue eyes, fine black brows and ripe red lips. If you will but write a list of all the materials you would need I can send to the port for them-one day to go, one to come back. Arica's husband can take the mule; in two days they will be here. She had her picture taken like that when first we were married, because I loved her little ear so and the curve of her cheek and her hair and neck.

"But, monsieur, it is not possible, unless, indeed, you have yet another miniature or drawing to guide me. However minutely you were to describe her—ah, well, you will understand that it would be out of the question. There are not only the features to think of; there is the expression, the—ah, everything. It seems ungracious to deny the one thing you ask of me, but, believe me, monsieur, it would only mean disappointment."

But now I want it all—all."

"My friend, you are very tired. Do not think me discourteous, but suppose we retire now; and by your leave I will wake you between dusk and dawn, so that you may see for yourself and judge of your model, Madame la Comtesse, ma femme."

The stranger turned and gazed at his host, surprised into such a sudden candor of glance that the old man smiled.

"No, mon ami, I am not mad; though you owe me no apology for thinking it. Do you see that mirror, gilt-framed, with the stooping eagle on top? It was at that mirror that she always sat to dress her hair, and in that mirror each morning between dark and dawn I now

see her face as it was in those days when she sat for her portrait—ah, forty, fifty, sixty years ago and more. Will you paint her for me, monsieur, so that I may see her face by day as well as by night—if so be you can make shift to paint by lamplight the woman I have loved, will love through all eternity. Do not trouble to protest that you believe me, that you are willing to humor what you must regard as an old man's senile imagining," he continued, with an airy gesture of his white hands and a wholly "but wait. Draw disarming smile, your couch nearer to mine so that I may wake you with a whisper, for alas, once in bed, there I must stay till the good Arica comes to raise and dress me."

"Mad." thought Du Poisson, as he stretched his limbs among the cushions the woman had placed on the sofa and arranged the tattered mosquito curtain, hung by a nail above the bed, to the best possible advantage. "Mad, but ah, mon Dieu, the blessed madness that has forgotten the world enough to forget even suspicion." Then, with the thought of that word "suspicion," there came crowding in upon him all the ugly fears of the last few months, and with them one of those ugly impulses that such fears seem to beget, born of the thought that one is already irrevocably involved, that one may as well, as they say, "hang for a horse as a sheep."

That miniature—the almost priceless jewels that surrounded it—what a power they would be! Du Poisson seemed to see the little shining blue gems like stepping stones to freedom—a passage on a tramp steamer or pearling boat to Canton or Hongkong, a new outfit, that luggage which spelt respectability in the world's eye, the easy transif then to San Francisco and freedom and the face of a people that suspected everyone and yet him with no more reason than another.

The moonlight was bright; it streamed in a clear white light through the open windows and across the bed where the old man lay on his back, sleeping, as so many very old people do sleep, with limbs composed as if ready for that last narrow bed. The white hands lay on the counterpane, such temptingly frail hands, and the miniature with its blue rim twinkling in the moonlight—so lightly clasped. Du Poisson could even see the curve of the painted neck and the darker mass of the hair on the lightly tinted ivory, and he found himself trying to measure with his eye the circumference and the number of sapphires, and figuring out in his mind the possible value of them; he knew something of such things, to his cost, for among Clarice's many passions the paramount had been one for precious stones such as these.

For hours he lay thus, gazing, thinking, till the moon sank and the room was dim with the tremulous light of stars, and the air began to grow chill and sweet with the scent of flowers, heralding dawn; while both the miniature and the hand that held it seemed slowly to merge into the bulk of the great bed. Then suddenly it seemed to the stranger that a fever swept through his veins, that he was past all reasoning.

Very, very quietly, he raised himself from the couch and dropped his feet on the narrow strip of floor between it and the bed. He only—only wanted to see that the treasure was safe in the feeble hands, only—only—

"Hush—hush!"

It was the merest breath, but it set the poor wretch trembling, trembling at himself and the guilt which he suddenly realized in his own heart.

"Hush!" It was the old man's voice. "Hush; it is she. See, the glass—see!"

And Du Poisson turned and looked—looked in the little dim old mirror topped with the tarnished eagle. And as he looked the memory of the twinkling, beckoning blue stones and of all the past evil and all future fear dropped like a weight of lead from his soul.

Over and around the mirror hung a light, and the depths of it were all light; and out of the light gazed a flowerlike face, a pair of blue eyes set with black lashes and crimson lips. There was the bright brown hair piled high on the head, there the full perfection of the cheek, the outer curve of which had been hinted at in the miniature, the very fullness of beauty and youth; yet more still—a

soul to which the beauty of the face was only as the glass to the lamp.

The eyes were turned toward the bed. filled with tenderness and an absolute Du Poisson could not see the old man's face, but there was no doubting that the eyes of husband and wife had met, and that she saw, not the worn and helpless husk, but the one man whose love had kept her soul through all the pitfalls of her wayward life. Then her eyes turned and rested on those of Du Poisson, with a gaze of infinite pity and infinite wisdom—the pity of one who knows well all the horrors of sin, the wisdom of one who has at last overcome, who has passed through purgatory to peace. And her glance seemed to burn away from him all fear and all craven shame, till the man realized that his sin lay between him and his God, and that only by a life of reparation could he expiate it.

How long the vision lasted he never knew, but only as the notes of the birds grew shrill in the garden and the sun brightened the shadowy room did he realize that the face was gone from the mirror, and that the old man slept like a

child in the great bed.

It was thus between dark and dawn, by the fitful light of one lamp, that the picture was painted at which the world has since so marveled. Night after night it grew slowly, very slowly on the canvas, for it was painted with a reverence as deep as prayer. The exquisite freshness and stillness of the tropical dawn, the scent of stephanotis. silent, yet ever speaking lips in the mirror, the wisdom and beauty of the blue eyes, the shrill first note of a half-awakened bird, the great bed with its four wreathed and twisted pillars of blackest oak, the peace of the old face, with the young eyes, on the pillow.

Du Poisson cleaned and tidied and scrubbed that room as it had never been cleaned or scrubbed before, toiling to and fro with buckets from the pool at the end of the garden; building a leanto for Arica and her pots, pruning and tending the creepers, with somewhere at the back of his mind the recognition that it was all symbolical of his own regenera-

tion, both of body and soul—that life to be sweet and wholesome must hold much commonplace labor; and yet, above all, the acknowledged reason for his toil, that the room which enshrined at dawn each day the lovely purified spirit of that woman whom the world had long counted as dead must be in itself pure.

Two years later Du Poisson was back in Paris. The picture itself hung in his studio, the now empty mirror above his mantle shelf, for the old man had left the artist all that he possessed when with a cry of ardent joy he had passed the barrier and the face had vanished for-

ever from the mirror.

"It is the end," thought Du Poisson. There were the picture, the mirror, the miniature, the jewels, the old china, the carved oak—but the soul was gone from it all. He had made reparation, doubly, trebly and yet perfunctorily, for he had long known himself purified from his actual sin. As for the cousin, Clarice was but a flower of two seasons ago, and there was no malice left in him at the sight of the crisp banknotes—besides, two years is a long, long time in the little memories of little people. "It is the end," thought the artist sadly as one who comes to the end of some book which has grown to seem part of his own real life.

Then one day his servant brought him a note from an artist friend. "I know you have been searching everywhere for a model for your Melisande. The bearer is not a professional model—she will sit for the head only; but she is very poor and glad to earn anything, while you, mon ami—you have only to see her! The strangest thing of all is that she is

the very double of your Woman of the Mirror."

"It is forty, fifty, sixty years ago and more," Du Poisson found himself repeating as the curtain over his studio door was pushed back and the bearer of the note stood there. Fifty years ago and more—and yet—and yet. The bright hair was covered by a shady straw hat, but there was the long white neck, the blue eyes, the full red lips, and, as the girl flushed beneath his glance and turned her head as if to shake it off, the perfect line of cheek, the little pink ear, that the old miniature had shown so well.

"Mam'selle—I pray—I would pray you to take off your hat." Ah, what tricks you women play, raising the ghosts of long dead fashions! There was the hair piled high and massed in curls on either temple and the same great curved comb of tortoise shell.

"Madame—Madame la Comtesse."
"No, monsieur—ah, monsieur, pardon, but you have mistaken me. I am only Lucille—Lucille, who—"

"Lucille—Lucille! Je viens!" Those were the last words that the old man had spoken, far far away, years and years back, as it seemed, in the land of dreams that lay beyond the lion's back.

"Lucille le Brun-it was my grand-

mother's name."

Forty—fifty—sixty years ago and more, the daughter that had been counted as dead! Ah, well, the old man knew it all now; but then he was old no longer. And suddenly Du Poisson realized that he, too, was young, gloriously young, and that all of life lay before him.



"SUCH a breezy conversationalist!"
"Oh, yes; he is always airing his opinions."



SOME men that can't be tempted with an apple will fall for a peach.

TAINTOR, OF SEVEN PRECIOUS DRAGONS

By George Bronson Howard

HIS very rich, very famous and no doubt very excellent uncle believed in peace at any cost. He believed in domestic peace, home and national, in industrial peace, in peace between the nations; in short, there were none of the fifty-seven varieties of peace to which he was not willing to subscribe his good will and a small modicum of the coin of the realm. But this last was astounding; it made Taintor gasp, and repeat over and over:

"Ten million dollars. Ten million dollars to promote the cause of international

peace—"

Parrotlike, he paraphrased the home

papers.

"Good Lord!" he added. "He must believe in it to dig up like that!" And

Taintor sighed.

It was seven years since the young man had declared his desire to become a soldier, and had fallen from grace with a thud.

"Go out, my boy," his uncle had said with a pious and deprecating shake of the head; "go out into the ways of evil, but do not return until you can come to me and strike a great blow"—and he smiled feebly to emphasize the fact that he used the martial word only figuratively—"a great blow for peace. Then I will forgive you this lamentable lapse."

And Taintor had departed. And now came the news of this munificent gift to affirm the more strongly just how much

uncle had meant what he said.

The day was inclined to be hot; even the yellow Yang-tse seemed affected by it and flowed torpidly, languorously. The brown hills to the north, east and west showed parched slopes that appeared to be running eagerly downward toward the silvery canals that threaded their wastes, and from the town of Seven Precious Dragons came an effluvium pecu-

liarly Chinese.

Not that Taintor was near enough to be offended by it; by his special order the barracks had been built a full half-mile from the town proper, irritating by their near presence the sad Yang-tse. They were scrupulously clean, for Taintor, modestly admitting that he was lacking in its hallowed complement, worshiped cleanliness; and, although three hundred ex-coolies resided within the great whitewashed barns, the whole compound was fresh with the smell of soap and scrubbing brushes.

Taintor made soldiers out of coolies with a touch of his magic stick; and, having made soldiers, he had no man to question his orders. Therefore the semi-annual ablution became ancient history, and his battalion turned out in the dawn, cursing the unrestful devil familiar of the Foreign Chief, which, from its position within his right nostril, informed him accurately concerning the True Son who had missed his morning torture.

Taintor had trained many True Sons in his day. He was a colonel and a mandarin of the Crystal Button, third rank. In the Chinese Foreign Legion, he was esteemed so highly that the Powers in Peking sent him continually to open new army posts and add to the roster of the Imperial Chinese Army. When he reported himself as satisfied with his battalion, they detached him and found a new place in the wilderness. Taintor

rather liked it. He had grown a solitary fellow, taciturn and inclined to be domineering. He was the only white officer in the service who wished no European assistance, taking with him everywhere three Chinese sub-officers whom he had trained himself and made lieutenants. They were men of birth and had three names, but Taintor called them Tom,

Dick and Harry.

This was another of his habits, the rechristening of his subordinates. Following the trail of Taintor, one discovers Chinese with perfectly proper Anglo-Saxon names. Following his draft upon the fields came the arrangement of their aliases, beginning with "A" and running the alphabet until the three hundred coolies were suitably provided with names Taintor could remember. He deleted "X" and "Y" since he could never think of proper Anglo-Saxon names beginning with those letters.

\mathbf{II}

Seven Precious Dragons had known Taintor for six months, and some coolies had made a joss in his form and worshiped it along with other tutelary devils. It was rumored that he had an alliance with the Fengshui, and that around his head circled a company of demons, chief among them the Nosey Devil which insisted on the sanitary reform of the town. When he walked through the town, undertakers, barbers, actors and other low caste people burned joss paper before him and cast prayer slips in his wake, hoping he would not notice any heaps of refuse before their abodes. For if such an outrage was noted, a True Son was apt to be visited by a squad and haled before the magistrate, who feared Taintor so much that he would sentence the offender to many strokes of the bamboo.

As the Commander in Chief said of

him:

"Crude—but effective. He wouldn't do for the diplomatic service. No wall is a blank to him; simply a thing to be kicked over. But some day he'll run his head against a buttress."

"What'll happen then?" asked the

Man Who Listened.

"Well, he won't stop with a bruise. Either the wall will topple or Taintor's head will smash. He's a great man for China."

You are not to imagine, however, that Taintor sowed dissension in Seven Precious Dragons. He asked only for cleanliness and discipline, concerning himself not at all with the moral or spiritual welfare of his people, bestirring himself only when they fell ill and the local magician could do nothing for them. Then he brought out quinine, calomel and morphia; and somehow these remedies bore out the Commander in Chief's estimate of Taintor's character. His absolute belief in them, transmitted to the sick, seemed an almost infallible curative.

III

As previously noted, the day was inclined to be hot. Taintor had been drilling the cavalry troop all morning with the aid of Lieutenant Tom, who commanded it. The infantry and artillery, under command of Lieutenants Dick and Harry, had been off on their own drill, rounding up for inspection at noon hour, and, after Taintor had detected several loose buttons, they had been commanded to fall out. Now, after a tepid bath and a satisfactory tiffin, Taintor, in shining white uniform, sat in a deck chair and contemplated the Yangtse.

His siesta was broken in upon when his personal servant, rechristened Jones, parted the swaying bamboo curtains and stepped from the dining room with a bow and a statement:

"White man come. Have got hair he

face all same this."

(Jones made a pantomime suggestion of Dundrearys, then touched his chin.)

"None have got here. Say have come boat long way—Shanghai. Say master his brother."

"My brother!" growled Taintor, a suspicion of the visitor's errand alarming him. "Well, show him the way."

He waited scowling until an ingratiating voice added a glare to the scowl. It addressed Jones.

"Thank you, young man, thank you.

I see him."

Taintor observed that he had made no mistake. The man was thin and spare, attired in bombazine with a clerical collar and a black dickey. Some goatlike hair slouched its way along his cheekbones; a wisp of oiled locks fell across his narrow forehead; and when he smiled, as he did often, several discolored teeth came into evidence. His enormous feet were in Congress gaiters; he wore black thread gloves and carried a handbag.

Taintor frowned heavily, failed to rise, grunted disapprovingly and, reaching up, twisted the close cropped mustache on his upper lip. The eyes that searched the newcomer's face held no hospitality, and his look of disapproval became heightened when the removal of the visitor's gloves disclosed that the finger nails carried out the general color

scheme.

"H'mph!" observed Taintor.

The visitor came nearer, smiling benevolently and showing large front teeth.

"Now this must be Colonel Taintor," he declared in a singsong voice. "My, my, Colonel, but I am glad to see you! And you are the only white man in this dear little town, are you not, Colonel?"

"I am," stated Taintor, looking past

him.

"With quite a flock of your own, I am told—three hundred dear precious souls. I hope you have sowed in this fertile ground, Colonel."

"It is not a flock," stated Taintor stol-

idly; "it is a battalion."

Probably on the assumption that Taintor's failure to ask him to be seated was a mere oversight, the visitor rectified it and put out his hand. Taintor stared away at the horizon. A puzzled look came to the eyes of the other; but he was snubproof and set Taintor's abstraction down to the cares of office, continuing in his singsong tones:

"You probably know who I am—" Taintor turned on him accusingly:

"You're a missionary!"

"So I am—so I am," replied the other, pleased at the recognition of his cloth. "The Reverend Joseph Hicks, of Passe-

mentery, Missouri, sent to this heathen country by a band of noble men and women who have denied themselves luxuries that I may bring into the fold many erring souls—"

"You're a missionary!" interrupted Taintor, frowning down any justifica-

tion of the fact.

The man moved uneasily and glanced furtively at Taintor's thick set figure, but, gaining confidence from the sound of his own voice, continued:

"To me has been given the glorious privilege of rescuing from eternal fire the inhabitants of this town. You realize what a glorious privilege that is, do you

not, Colonel Taintor?"

Taintor merely looked up the river in the direction of Shanghai, wishing he had in Seven Precious Dragons the men who had allowed the Reverend Joseph to interfere with the peaceful scheme of things. He would show them a thing or two!

"See here!" he exclaimed, goaded by a sense of grievance. "What do you

want here?"

"Your cooperation, Colonel," answered Mr. Hicks, optimistically revealing his teeth. "I shall begin with your soldiers—although, perhaps, you have already sown the seeds—"

"I'm a soldier, not a farmer," snarled

Taintor.

"But, Colonel," protested Hicks, returning to uneasiness, "metaphors, you know—metaphors, parables—"

Taintor did not answer.

"I have a letter to the Taotai of the town, requesting him to furnish me with a house. I have ample funds out of which I hope soon to build a little chapel, and then the good work will begin—"

Taintor wheeled round in his chair.
"You go back to Shanghai. Then you
beat it back to the States. You and your

kind's not wanted here."

He paused, gathering words.

"There was a missionary here—once," he continued; "that's why the Chinese government had to establish an army post here. One man—one little flea of a man like you—and he cost a thousand lives and a million dollars. I'm going to tell you about him."

He pushed the protesting Hicks back into the chair and towered threateningly

above him.

"You think you have a mission. So did he. He began to make converts. The only converts he made were 'Rice Christians.' D'you know that kind thieves, beggars, general no-good rats? A missionary won't see a convert starve even if he doesn't work; so it was very profitable for them to be Christians. Now when New Year Understand? comes in China, every man has to pay his debts or go to jail. That's the law. Almost every convert had debts, but when the law tried to touch them, this fellow called it 'persecution of Christian Chinese,' and sent to Shanghai for a gunboat to shoot up the town. Well, rather than have the town shot up, the Taotai let the no-good rats out of jail.

"That was a good start now, wasn't it? But the missionary wasn't satisfied with having all the rogues and scoundrels, so, knowing he could get the gunboat any time he wanted it, he started to go after honest men. He'd go into some inoffensive coolie's house and chuck down his little josses and break 'em. Then he'd tell 'em what they ought to worship. We'll, they wanted to slit his throat, but they were afraid of the gunboat; so they stood the joss breaking and the

preaching.

"But then he started baby snatching. He said he couldn't bear to think of newborn children brought up in heathendom. So when a child was born, he'd take it away from its parents, and the only way they could get it back was to pretend to become Christians themselves.

"They stood for all this because their wise men told them that the gunboat would surely kill them all if they harmed the white men. But there's a limit, and

he went over it.

"He walks into the temple here one fine day and throws down the big Shinto idol while everybody's at worship. That was his finish. They knifed him and threw him in the road and wouldn't let anybody bury him. They knifed his wife, his children, his servants and all the 'Rice Christians.'

"And that's all the good he did!"

ш

THE other had listened in rapt attention, his hands clasped. Now his feelings overcame him and he burst out:

"A martyr! A martyr!"

"Martyr, my foot!" shouted Taintor, his face flushing. "Revolutionist, incendiary, anarchist! He turned this town inside out. He was the cause of a general uprising in which a thousand men lost their lives. The whole province was talking Boxer pidgin. They sent me up here to straighten things out. I've straightened 'em out, and by God, they're going to stay straightened!"

He looked fixedly at the Reverend

Joseph Hicks.

"You go back to Shanghai and then to the States. Your kind of religion is all right for the States, and there's a lot of people you can do some good back there. But it's no good for China. These people have laws and customs that don't go with the kind of religion you practise. They can never work together. Now—"

He got up and put two strong hands on the shoulders of the Reverend Jos-

eph Hicks.

"Think I'm going to let you break up the peace of this province? Go back, I tell you! What right have you got to try and cram a religion down the throats of a people who don't want it? They're good enough; just as good as human nature can be under any religion; and they've got a right to their choice of worship. If you didn't have the United States navy at your back I'd let you You wouldn't worry 'em much. But if you get hurt, the pious people that sent you will cry out for 'vengeance.' Bah-you disgust me, you and your kind! You come here in the name of the Lord of Peace, and you yell for bloody war the minute you get scratched. Go back, you whiskered pup, and go back quick!"

With some detriment to the bombazine coat, Mr. Hicks wrenched himself free and backed to the dining room windows panting with terror. But when he saw Taintor drop into a chair and anticipated no violence, he shrieked malevo-

lently:

"I'll stay here and do my duty! I don't care what unbelievers like you think! I'll save souls for the Lord in spite of what the devil's henchmen say. And I'll report you, sir, to the authorities in Shanghai. I'll have you removed. I'll blazon your unbelief and your wicked, blasphemous language to the whole Christian world. I'll—"

The inquiring face of Jones appeared at the doorway. Taintor was smiling.

"The gentleman seems a little weak in the knees, Jones," he said; "help him out. Better go back to Shanghai, Mr. Hicks."

"I'll show you, sir, what I'd better do!" shouted the angry Mr. Hicks.

IV

For some time after Hicks had gone, Taintor sat in meditation. He was a good enough sort, Taintor; his life had been decent and straightforward, and he had a simple primitive religion that suited him. Here in Seven Precious Dragons he had done good work, and now he faced the prospect of having it undone by an underbrained countryman. Taintor knew the Chinese too well to believe that Christianity could ever harmonize with their customs; while the evil a zealot might do had been evidenced by Mr. Hicks's predecessor.

"I've got to stop it," he said aloud, and called Jones, who took his message to Lieutenant Tom, Taintor's invaluable adviser in all matters relating to the Ce-

lestial temperament.

"A missionary has come to town,

Tom!"

Tom, an intelligent, youthful-looking Chinese in the tan serge undress uniform of an officer of the Imperial Army, nodded and rattled his long fingernails against the jewel-encrusted hilt of his sword.

"I know that, Colonel," he said, picking his English carefully. "Come two hours go by. Velly solly. Chinese do not like misshney man; make tloo much bobbelly byme-by. Thouble plesently."

Taintor nodded gravely.

"There's a large junk sailing up the river tonight, Tom," he remarked, meeting the inscrutable Chinese eyes. "The

master came to me for a customs writing. He owes us many favors, Tom. You know him?"

"Velly good man. I savvy him."

"He goes up the Yang-tse and sails down to Burma, doesn't he?"

"Langoon, Colonel."

"And how long does it take to get to Rangoon on a junk like that?" inquired Taintor, without removing his gaze.

"No savvy that," said Lieutenant Tom, shrugging his shoulders. "Maybe he tlade some time all town. Two months, maybe—maybe thlee—maybe moa'—"

"Tom," interrupted Taintor, tugging at his mustache so hard that the skin strained, "you find out where the missionary stops; tonight you have a man follow him—"

The Lieutenant saluted.

"Then you take Dick and Harry, put

on coolie clothes and go-"

Tom made a warning gesture. Their heads drew close together and the remainder of the conversation was conducted in whispers. But the instructions seemed satisfactory to the subordinate, for he rose, grinning discreetly as he turned; and on his retailing the orders to Lieutenants Dick and Harry, the oblique smiles on the faces of the three well groomed young noblemen would seem to hint that there was a spice of wickedness in the story.

But they were not well groomed when they made their report to Taintor that night; in fact, the casual eye would have seen in them only unclean workingmen of low caste. Their report was made in five minutes, for Taintor had drilled them out of the circumlocutory Chinese method of speech and substituted mili-

tary terseness.

And after the smiling trio had become a quartette, the Colonel recalled them to their positions and rose.

"I shouldn't wonder at all three of you getting your captaincies pretty soon,"

he observed.

V

In due course of time the epistle which Taintor indited that night reached the dignitary for whom it was intended and was read by him to the Man Who

"There," said the Commander in Chief, "is Taintor in all his glory. Why," and the Commander in Chief grew reminiscent, "a son of a friend of mine went to school with him when he was a spoiled and pampered youngster. He's a nephew—you know. Soldiering's made a man of him, and didn't I tell you when he saw an obstacle he kicked it over?"

Devoid of the stiff and formal address, the Man Who Listened heard some-

what as follows:

SIR:

I have to report that the Reverend Joseph Hicks, of Passementery, Mo., arrived at this port today. When conversing with the Colonel in command of this station he showed a disposition to remain in the town and open a mission settlement in spite of said Colonel's discouragement of any such idea. He left this office at

noon, and I have not seen him since.

However, it has been brought to my ears, unofficially, that he embarked aboard a junk bound for Rangoon, with all his belongings and appurtenances. As I am credibly informed that he will be three months en route, I make this report that this information may be at hand in event of inquiries being made as to the aforesaid Hicks. I am acquainted with the master of the junk and can assure Mr. Hicks's friends of his safety.

If I may be pardoned the suggestion, which this event brings forcibly to mind, I would suggest respectfully that the Commander in Chief influence the authorities to the end that no

other missionaries be sent here.

In conclusion I have the honor to recommend the following officers for promotion to the grade

of captain:

Lieut. Ling-Ah-Cha, I. C. A.
(known as Lieut. Tom Ling)
Lieut. Thsang-Li-Seu,
(known as Lieut. Dick Sang)
Lieut. Kai-Foy-Yuan,
(known as Lieut. Harry Kye.)

These officers have merited promotion for some time, and I urge that their change of rank be made at the earliest possible moment.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,
Andrew Tainton, 2d.,
Colonel, I. C. A., Commanding.

"Still I don't understand," complained the Man Who Listened, handing back the letter, after he, in turn, had read it to himself.

"No military man reports himself as guilty of shanghaiing," laughed the Commander in Chief, "but Taintor knows me well enough to let me read between the lines. Three months on a junk to Rangoon! I'll wager a year's salary that after that trip you can make Hicks froth at the mouth by showing him anything yellow. I don't know where Passementery is, but I'll bet Mr. Hicks's boys'll break all the laundrymen's windows if they're Chinese."

The Man Who Listened acquiesced

with solemn nods.

"Why did Colonel Taintor resign so shortly after performing so noteworthy a feat?" he asked.

The Commander in Chief sighed and

shook his head.

"I hated to lose him. When he came in to say good-bye he told me he had news from home that his uncle was going to give a lot of money to the foreign missions. Said something about preventing it, striking a great blow for peace and reinstating himself in the old man's favor. He wasn't very clear, to tell the truth. I couldn't get any details out of him; he didn't have very much time to talk, as he was making plans to leave for San Francisco on the next boat. But I gather he's going to try to make his wealthy avuncular relative see a great light."

Then, chuckling of a sudden, he made a note to promote Lieutenants Tom,

Dick and Harry.

"In recognition," he muttered in his beard, "of their valuable services tending toward the preservation of order in Seven Precious Dragons, and the promotion of the International Peace Movement."



PARKER—What has become of Hooker? When I knew him he seemed determined to go to the bad.

Tucker—Well, he made good.

THE CUB

By Paul Crissey

AIDLAW and Jennings had long since passed their apprentice-ship in newspaper work. Both had reached the stage where column space fazed them but little. Half a column or half a page made no difference in their salaries, and they are accordingly. So when I joined them for supper one evening in the Red Mill they were lavish hosts. Laidlaw had often surprised me by his bits of appreciation, especially of characters seen in the newspaper offices, and frequently he had told me several charming little stories of the life above the presses. But tonight he was strangely His eyes wandered about the silent. room, and rested finally upon a couple seated in a quiet corner paying but little attention to the crowd about them.

"He is a cub reporter," Laidlaw said slowly. "He's been in the business for twenty years—but he's still a cub."

Although Laidlaw seldom started a story in this manner, I scented some-

thing and urged him on.

"I supposed everybody knew his history," he said, "but if you haven't I'd be glad to enlighten you. I'm in it, too, though only a very small portion of the real story belongs to me. Go on and eat. I'm not hungry. I'll tell you the story while you clear the board."

Sterns had just come out of college when I went in on the city editor's desk at the *Times*. He was a small, inoffensive young fellow, with little or no aggressiveness, when he came to me for a job. His English professor at Harvard had loaded him up with letters of recommendation, and his family was back-

ing him with a string of hopes as long as a boa constrictor. Well, I took him on and gave him a few obituaries to do. He wrote them fairly well, all except one. He was reading the morning paper when I called him to the desk.

"Look here," I said sharply, "what in the world do you suppose our readers care about this dead man's daughter and where she is going to spend the summer? That has no place in an 'obit.'"

"I see," said Sterns; "I only put it in because I thought it was a good way to mention the fact that her father had left her some money and that she won't be penniless."

I looked at the Cub. He was serious all right, so I questioned him further. "How much did the old man leave?" I asked.

"Six millions," replied Sterns.

I gave one big jump out of my chair

and nearly swallowed my cigar.

"Six millions!" I yelled, and the copy readers rose as if they had suddenly discovered tacks in their chairs. One of them, I remember, laughed, and that set Sterns on edge.

"Who was this fellow, anyhow?"
"His name," replied Sterns coldly,
"was Stone. He was president of the

Belt Line."

"Oh, Lord!" I groaned. "Go back to your desk, Sterns, until I can find some-

thing I know isn't a story."

That night I found him just as he was leaving the office. He had the last edition before his eyes, and was reading his four-line obituary that had grown into a front page scarehead. His hands shook as he held the paper, but he had made a

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bad bull and I couldn't help him out with any sympathy.

"Keep your eyes open," I said shortly as I passed out. "There may be a big

story in every breath you take."

Well, the next morning he was half an hour late to the office. I didn't say anything about it, but when three mornings had elapsed and he had been from a half-hour to an hour late each time, I called him up to the desk. Briefly I told him he would have to get down on time or quit.

"I live out in the suburbs," he replied, "and I come in over the Belt Line. We've been blocked in the yards for three mornings. I can't get any train

earlier. I'm sorry."

"What do they hold you up out in the

yards for?" I asked offhand.

"Mack—he's the conductor—says that they can't get the switches over. I don't know what's the real reason."

I let it go at that, and the Cub went back to his desk. About an hour later the boy came back to me. I was going through some A. P. copy—Associated Press, you know—when he touched me on the shoulder.

"I want to get off for a few hours, Mr. Laidlaw," he said. "I think I may be

able to scare up a good story."

I looked up in surprise. It was an unusual request.

"What's on?" I inquired. But the Cub shook his head.

"I don't know for sure," he answered,

"but it may be a good story."

Now I seldom let my men go out on any wild duck hunts without first knowing what they're after; but in this case I felt that I wouldn't miss Sterns so very much. So I nodded my head and he went out, taking a big block of paper with him.

He didn't show up at noon, and I got to wondering what was keeping him. Finally I remembered our conversation about his train. It struck me suddenly that maybe his story had something to do with the Belt Line. I couldn't get rid of the idea. An hour before the last edition went to press I called up Morganthaler, the vice-president of the Belt Line, and asked him if there was any-

thing doing. He laughed in a funny way and said he hadn't heard of anything. So I let it go at that and put it down to foolishness on the boy's part. At quitting time the Cub showed up. He was dead tired and had but little to say.

"Nothing doing yet," he said briefly. Then he asked me who had charge of the militia in our division of the State. I told

him.

"I want to be out of the office all day tomorrow," he said shortly, and I nodded again. You see, you can never tell just what is going to throw a story your way.

Well, two days later the phone on my desk rang and I answered it. Sterns's voice came hesitatingly over the wire.

"I want to speak to Robinson," he said. Robinson was the traction expert of the *Times*, and a veteran. So I called him and went on delving through the heap of copy on my desk.

Finally Robinson hung up the re-

ceiver.

"What is it?" I asked. "Has the kid

got a real story?"

"I don't know," replied Robinson seriously. "I don't know whether that boy has got sense enough to smell a story; but he says that three companies of militia have been ordered to make ready for an immediate move to the city here—and that the fast trains on the Belt Line are all late. There may be something in it. I'll look it up."

If I live to be a hundred years old I'll never forget what happened that afternoon. At three o'clock, just as the sporting extra was going on the press, Robinson staggered into the office with his face bleeding from a broken nose and

both of his eyes closed.

"Laidlaw," he cried, and the tears streamed down his cheek, "Laidlaw, there's hell broken loose on the Belt Line! Every man, crew and mechanic on every road in this city has dropped his work. We're tied up completely—and that damned kid—"

Cotter, who was writing heads at the copy desk, made a dive for him just as he fell, and I cleared the railing beside my desk in one jump. I sent Tommy, the copy boy, for a glass of water, and we

sloshed it over the bloody face of Robinson.

"Once more, Rob," I cried, "what is it?"

The man's head was waving drunkenly on his neck, but he mumbled the answer.

"Complete tie-up-of roads. Biggest

-strike-in-years!"

It didn't take me long to find out what to do. I sent Tommy hotfoot for the press room with orders to stop every wheel in the place. Then I jumped to the phone and got Darling out in the composing rooms.

"Jerk three right hand columns on the first page. Never mind what they are. Clear the machines and get ready

for a big story."

Then I got one of our reporters down before his typewriter, and prodded Robinson to tell his story. It came slowly, I tell you, without much regard for sequence, but it was a big one. One by one the sheets of paper were snatched from the reporter's machine and hurried through the tubes to the composing room. Half an hour after Robinson had staggered into our room the *Times* was out on the street with a story three columns wide about the biggest strike that had ever landed on the city.

The boys went home. Robinson still had his head on the desk, mumbling

fiercely to himself.

"Who hit you?" I asked, for I had time now that we were safely closed up

on the big story.

The traction man, looking up at me with his eyes shining through their blackened lids, muttered "Sterns. When I found him, he was telling all he knew to Fisher of the *Blade* and Condon of the *Republic*. I had to fight to stop him."

"Where is he now?" I asked.

"In the hospital," said Robinson. Then he laughed. "I hope he stays

there," he added.

That closed the incident, but let me tell you, this was only the beginning of some of the biggest stories we ever had on the *Times*. Railroad presidents ran their own freight trains for the few weeks that followed, and bricks and revolvers were as plentiful as macaroni in Little Italy. I was on the jump from morning till night, and every man in the office wore out a ribbon or two each day on his typewriter. Oh, we were busy then!

Well, a week later Sterns showed up. His face was pretty well battered and he was a wreck. But somehow I couldn't fire him. I let him stay, and for days he wrote feature stories on various phases of the strike. Finally I sent him to the car shops way out south to do a little story on their desolate windows and idle machinery. He took a cab coming back, and that was the day he nearly passed

his cubship—but not quite.

He told me the whole story afterward. It seems that he was coming down one of the boulevards in his cab when a militia cannon wagon loaded to the brim with ammunition passed over the tracks just ahead of him. Sterns wouldn't tell me just what it looked like as the rear wheels of the trucks went over the last rail, but I could imagine. You've heard of that incident, no doubt, when the wagon blew up. God! There wasn't enough left of that gun crew to pick up with a blotter. Sterns's horse was killed and the cab driver crumpled up in his seat, dead as a doornail. One jump took Sterns to the hole in the ground where the tracks and the cannon wagon had been. He nosed around for a while, until his eye lighted on an object close to the track. There was a deep hole close beside it, and Sterns made a mental note of the fact. He slipped the thing he had picked up into his pocket and made tracks to the nearest telephone. But he was too late.

Three other reporters from different papers had corralled every telephone in the neighborhood. They had been over at the camp a block away when the explosion occurred, and they held the phones for an hour and a half. Three papers were out on the street before we got the story. But we got it, finally, and of course we weren't scooped completely. Sterns was still a cub, you see. He had fizzled—he had been too slow.

Some time later he came into the office. Most of the boys had gone. He leaned over my desk.

"I'm going to make good this time,"

he said, "and I'm going to tell you how." As he spoke he reached into his pocket and pulled out a short stubby dagger. He drove it into the railing beside my desk.

"The man that owns this knife," he said slowly, " is the man who planted the bomb that blew up the cannon wagon. I'm going to get him, Mr. Laidlaw—and until I do, I'll keep out of the office!"

I started to speak to him, then stopped. "Go ahead," I said finally.

For two solid hours that boy nosed over the files of the week before the strike. At last he found what he wanted. It was a short notice of a fasting period in a certain foreign church far out in one of the suburbs near the car shops. He came back to his desk and took out a revolver, which he shoved into his pocket. Then he went out.

He told me later that he went to the church. How he knew which one to go to was an easy problem, once he explained it. In the first place, on the handle of the dagger he had found a tiny cross engraved, and on the cross were seven tiny wings. The Church of the Sure; it was simple Seven Angels! enough! Well, he went out there and looked through the records until he found a man's name that tallied with the initials cut into the handle of the dagger. It was very simple. The dagger had a date also cut into the wood of the handle. It was the fasting day—so he looked up all those who had attended services that day. He got the right man, an Italian, and went to see him.

By George, it was a funny day for the Cub! He entered one of the old shacks that face the car barns and backed up on the Belt Line. An old Italian was playing with a dirty little rascal of a baby on the floor when he entered. Sterns sat down beside him, and pulled out the dagger, which he laid on the floor. Beside it he laid his revolver.

"Is this yours?" he asked. But the

man shook his head with a smile.

"Can'ta maka me-" said the man; and smiling as he did so, he laid down an exact duplicate of the boy's find.

The Cub shrugged his shoulders and gave the baby a couple of playful digs in the ribs. This tickled the old man.

"You lika da babee?" he asked.

Sterns nodded.

"You gotta one babee yoursel'?" he asked, still smiling.

Sterns blushed.

"I haven't anything," he replied shortly, and the Italian laughed noiselessly.

"An' da babee gotta only me," he

said, "an' da ladee what-"

But just as he was about to finish the statement a shadow appeared in the doorway and a young woman entered. "Donatello," she cried, "where is

your brother?"

The old Italian raised his hat.

"Ah—da ladee!" he cooed, and picked

the baby up with him as he rose.

"Yes," she said hurriedly, ignoring Sterns. "Where is your brother? Men are asking for him. He has gone. There is something wrong."

About this time Sterns stepped up

with his hat in his hand.

"I am looking also for one member of this family. I want the man that owns this knife." As he spoke he held the knife before the girl. She shuddered.

"Perhaps this is the man I want," said the boy, and he looked at the old man with the baby in his arms.

The girl shook her head.

"No, it isn't," she replied sharply. "I know him of old. I guess-it must bebe his brother." Then she turned to the old man.

"Where is Tony?"

"You wanta leetle Tony?" he asked. "He gone away. Leava da house. You no wanta Tony."

There was a rustling of bedclothes in an adjoining room, and Sterns started.

"You're lying!" he cried. brother is there—in that room! I want him-and I'm going to have him."

As he spoke, the Cub, to whom sense was given in a few ways and not others, started for the door of the bedroom. The noise in the room had increased, and a window was hurriedly raised. The Cub kicked at the door and it went in with a crash. The girl, who was a settlement worker, screamed, and the old man gathered the baby tighter in his arms.

The Cub, with his gun raised, entered

the room, and as he did so there was a crash and a bit of smoke filtered through the doorway. A second of silence, and then, white-faced with a strange horror, he came out of the bedroom.

"He—he is—dead!" he choked, and leaned against the doorway for support. "But I got his—written confession."

The girl, with her eyes fairly starting from her head, whispered one question:

"Did—did—you—shoot him?"
The Cub smiled wearily, but rather happily.

"No," he answered; "Tony shot him-

self."

And that was about all, except that Sterns came back to the office, fooled around with his typewriter for some time and at last called Williams, a new man who had made good, over to him and told him the whole story. Sterns never wrote a word of it. He left the office in the afternoon.

Jennings, by the time Laidlaw's story reached this point, smiled and urged him

"Laidy," he jeered, "why in the name of heaven don't you ever tell that story clear to the end? There's Sterns getting up now. Tell our friend here how it finally came out." "Nothing much more to tell," said Laidlaw, and I seldom finish the story—it is so unbelievable. However, in the morning when Sterns came down to work I offered to take him out of his cubship by giving him a reporter's star. He thanked me naïvely and walked into the managing editor's room, where he sat down and began to look over the morning's mail!

"Well. I went in to see him in a few minutes, and he told me how he wanted the paper laid out for the day. You see he was the managing editor! I asked him how it happened, and he told me. Seems that the daughter of old Stone, former president of the Belt Line, was a warm friend of his. She was also a settlement worker-was in the Italian's house when he went there for his story. She saw what sort of a life he was leading, and she didn't like it. So she finally consented to marry him. The Stone estate owned the Times, and the girl made him managing editor. Simple, wasn't it? He married her five days after he gave his scoop to Williams to write."

"But he's still a cub, isn't he?" I

asked, as Laidlaw lit his cigar.

"He's still a cub—the biggest kind of a cub; but believe me, he is some managing editor!"



WHEN LOVE AWAKES

By Florence L. Lancaster

IST! 'Tis the south wind herald woos the leaves;
Athrill beneath that warm, kiss-laden sigh,
They quiver paled. The river's bosom heaves
To meet the coy glance of the wayward sky
Smiling thro' fall of tears. With lissome art
The mating swallow flits in playful dart,
While from yon coppice, hark, the blackbird's heart
Bursts forth in joy. Young May, the love witch, hies
O'er the charmed earth, and lo, in glad surprise
The slumb'ring blossoms wake with tender eyes!

THE SONG OF THE RAIL

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

H, an ugly thing is an iron rail,
Black, with its face to the dust;
But it carries a message, where winged things fail,
It crosses the mountain and catches the trail,
While the winds and the sea make sport of a sail;
Oh, a rail is a friend to trust.

The iron rail, with its face to the sod,
Is only a bar of ore;
Yet it speeds where never a foot has trod,
And the narrow path where it leads grows broad,
And it speaks to the world in the voice of God,
That echoes from shore to shore.

Though an iron rail on the earth downflung Seems kin to the loam and the soil, Wherever its high shrill note is sung, Out of the jungle fair homes have sprung; And the voices of Babel find one tongue, In the common language of toil.

Of priest and warrior and conquering king, Of knights of the Holy Grail, Of wonders of winter and glories of spring, Always and ever the poets sing; But the great God Force, in a lowly thing, I sing, in my song of the rail.



HUDSON—Is he a chip off the old block?

JUDSON—Worse yet; he's a cornice off the old whited sepulcher.



COME people never arrive at a definite conclusion till they die.

A TRIANGULAR HONEYMOON

By Emerson Hough

remarked Captain John O'Brien, pulling down one corner of a bandage and disclosing a truculent blue eye, in which there still remained as much war as welcome.

"You seem to have been once more in the breach, my noble Irish," I remarked. "But what would the Marine Hospital do without you? Are you in for a long case this time?"

"You ought to see the other fellow," he grunted. "You can, too, if you want to."

"Where?"

"In the morgue."

Which was quite true, as the mortuary records proved for the day conclusively.

"It was all along of his trying to run my ship," O'Brien added at length.

"The sea'll get you yet, Captain John," I said, taking a chair which the nurse brought to me.

"When the time comes, maybe. Until

then I'll run my own ship.

"But isn't it strange," he went on after some time, "how luck follows you all your life? I had a bridal party on board ship—so I had trouble. It never fails. Now there's got to be bridal couples, Lord bless you, yes! They don't hoodoo all ship captains, but they do me every time. Why? Because my luck broke that way when I first began to sail the seas."

"You'd better not talk too much," said I. Which was the surest way to get

him to talk.

"It was my first ship, the Lady Jane," he went on after a while. "She's gone to her grave long ago. I wasn't thirty then, but my owners put me in as mas-

ter, and I was master. The father of Wallie Phelps knew my father and me, and Wallie and I were chums. When he came twenty-one, the old man gave him the Lady Jane as a present, and he put me aboard her as master. And I promised his father and mother—who were just like parents to me, since my own had died long before—that I'd bring him back safe to them, no matter what happened.

"Then, after I'd signed on as master of the Lady Jane, out to Hongkong and back to Hawaii and 'Frisco, the old man told me, 'It's going to be Wallie's wedding journey,' said he. It was the first time I knew Wallie had been married.

"The woman? Maybe he found her in Vienna, maybe somewhere in Germany, for all I know, or she might even have been English. She spoke all the languages I ever heard. Tall she was, with fair white skin and green eyes, and hair a chestnut brown. She didn't walk

—sort of swept along.

"How came Wallie to marry her I don't know—who can tell? But as to him, the case was different. In all my life I've seen a lot of men go foolish over a lot of different sorts and colors of woman in all the corners of the world, but never have I seen a man gone so foolish as he was. And she was a maneating tiger—that is what she was. And she was the only woman on board the ship.

"I suppose it's natural for a man to fancy seeing his wife admired by other men. But why take even your best friend along on your honeymoon? Especially a honeymoon at sea? And especially, again, a man like Delavan

French?

"We fixed up quarters for Wallie and his wife. 'I'm going out,' says he, 'to see the East. I want to learn about life,' says Wallie to me, and then he adds

to himself, 'and about love.'

"A large order, my friend! If I'd had sense enough to have chucked her overboard in New York harbor, and Delavan French with her, and had given Wallie a tip on how to run his own ship even if it put somebody in the morgue, it would have been a lot better voyage for us all.

"We weren't beyond the Hook when hell broke out on the Lady Jane. Not open hell, like the row when I got this billet to the Marine here—that sort's easy to handle—but the quiet, cold, sneaking sort of hell that you can't get

your hands on anywhere.

"It didn't seem to be in Wallie's soul to think of his wife, Paula, as anything but some sort of red-haired stained glass saint, but we weren't off Cape Hatteras before it was hard to tell which man was which in Paula Phelps's eyes, Wallie or Delavan French. Quite often we all ate at my table together for dinner. I noticed that Wallie began to go deep into his second bottle, and with him it was champagne. What could I do?

"We were to put in at Rio, and when we made the harbor mouth Wallie came to me and said he, 'John'—he didn't always call me 'Captain' when we were alone together—'John,' said he, 'we've had a nice run down the coast, and I'm proud to know the line has in its service so able a master as yourself. And now, since we have had a nice journey together, we'll stop here a day or so and then put about and head back to New York.'

"I looked him once in the face. 'We'll

do nothing of the sort,' said I.

"He was one of the white, quiet kind. It was quite a while before he answered me, and then it was very gentle, for we were friends: 'You know, John, she's

my ship, don't you?'

"'She is your ship,' said I, 'but she's got your father's cargo, and I'm sailing her, and I'm duly signed, and I'm under orders to take her out to Nagasaki and to Hongkong, and to bring her back by Hawaii and 'Frisco; and I'm going to do

it. Now go to your room.' And I give you my word, my friend, the owner of my ship looked me square in the eye, saluted and turned back to his quarters

like the man he was!

"By the time we made the Horn, Wallie was taking a full bottle or two at dinner, and more from time to time during the day. But the champagne only made him white and steady and thin. There was something in his soul which kept him from getting drunk. But one day, when we headed out into the old Pacific and poked our nose into the trades, he came to me quiet and serious, and said he: 'John, you made my people a promise once, didn't you?'

"'Yes, Wallie, my boy, I did,' said I.
"'Make it again,' said he; 'make it stronger, John—make it to me. Promise me that no matter what happens, dead or alive, you'll take us back, both of us, back home. You'll do that, won't you,

John?

"The skin on my spine crawled from end to end of my back, but I promised him. I didn't suggest to him once that, though I was master of his own ship, he was master of his own home. And I had to wait—my God, how I had to wait! But still Wallie did not kill him. That three-cornered honeymoon went on, around the Horn, up into the Pacific; and Wallie didn't kill him.

"The voyage seemed to me two years long before we came into Nagasaki port and went ashore into that yellow medley of five and forty years ago. We had to unship a part of our cargo here before going on to Hongkong, and I had business, too, with the agents of our line at

this port.

"I was on shore one evening, and on my way back to the Lady Jane I stopped in for just a glass of something at the garden of one of these places—little trees around, you know, and screens and all that sort of thing, and flowers in a solid wall on one side. It was just beyond that wall that I heard them talking. I would know her voice anywhere, and French's laugh was easy enough to recognize.

"'My God!' I heard her say. 'I am so tired of him.' I heard her like she was

stretching and yawning. Then I heard his voice. They went on talking quite matter of fact. They would go on with the Lady Jane to Hongkong, and therewell, Wallie might do as he liked, and I might do as I liked, and the ship would do as she liked, but as for them, they would wander in the East and learn of life—and love!

"I didn't even yet say a word to Wallie. Surely, I thought, he'll kill him in

Nagasaki. But he didn't.

"At two o'clock in the morning I called my mate and gave orders to let go all our lines, up anchor and set sail. We had tide and wind with us fair enough, and before anyone knew what was my plan, we were out of port and standing along the cursed Japanese shore.

"Three hours later, when we were out of the harbor, Wallie came to me in his pajamas, and said he, 'What's this, John—what's this? We're under sail!'

"'We are, Wallie,' said I.
"'For Hongkong?'

"'No, my boy, for home."

"'But we've not unshipped our Nagasaki cargo. You're using your own whim —you're sailing without clearance, and not obeying the orders of your owners. You cleared for Nagasaki and Hongkong, and now you say you're going

home. Are you mad?'

"'No, my boy,' said I. 'I'm the only sane man on this ship, and I'm running her, do you understand? I'm going to begin my honeymoon with the sea by running my first ship, and I hope to run all my others,' says I. 'I've got my work to do. And you've got yours, too, Wallie. I count on you to do it.' He turned back, and didn't say a word.

"As to French, he raved when he found what was up, threatened me with the law, cursed me up and down until I ordered him to his room. Paula, Wallie's wife, looked at me once with her wide eyes, and all she did was just to smile and spread out her hands. If she cared very much, you couldn't find it out.

"There never was a lovelier clipper in all the Yankee fleets than this same Lady Jane, and at times I was so proud of her that I almost forgot the ruin of my first voyage. It all passed like a dream,

week after week, the bright sky, the long heave of the sea and little else. But one day at last we rounded Molokai and came to off Honolulu for water and supplies. They lightered us out what we needed; and I stood at the rail with my hand in my pocket, close to a six-shooter, and I allowed no one to go on shore except my mate. I waited and waited. Surely, said I to myself, Wallie'll do it here. But he did not; and he drank and drank. And still I hung to my promise to take him—and her—back home, in spite of all.

"When we got under way again I poked her nose straight for 'Frisco. In the evening of as lovely a day as ever ended on the sea we put the point of Molokai down little by little astern, and after a while the stars lit up in the sky above the red where the sun had faded. I was moody and glum enough as I passed aft along the rail and looked back at the lowering line of land and up at

the coming of the stars.

"It was then, as I had forgot myself for a moment, that I heard Wallie speak, close at my side and quiet-like.

"'So you see them, too, do you, John?' said he. 'I should think they'd be tired by now, swimming so far.'

"He nodded out across the sea astern. Drink never affected his tongue, and every word he said was clean cut and elegant, as always with him, for he spoke like a gentleman, even in his cups. But there was something new in the tone of his voice which made me shiver. I turned and looked at him sharp. Then I pretended to turn and look astern again. 'Why, to be sure,' said I, 'since you mention it.'

"'Don't you think we'd better wear ship and pick them up, John?' he asked me. 'They must be very tired.' But I didn't know yet what he could be meaning. He spoke almost plaintively.

"'Flying so far?' said I, thinking that

maybe he meant the birds.

"'Flying?' he answered. 'Why, no, swimming! Those two angels yonder have followed us for over a thousand miles. They followed us off the Japan coast, in fact. Out of the East, the old, old East. They want to tell me, John,

about things. There's been something someone has wanted to tell me for days and days—I don't seem to have known just what, but it's something about life—and love. Now if we wore ship and let them come aboard, I'm sure they'd tell me. I could then perhaps understand what I ought to do. You see—'

"'Wallie,' said I, quickly shaking him by the shoulder, 'come with me. You're tired. I want you to lie down now for a while and take a little rest. It'll take me a little time to wear ship and pick up these people that you mention, but just as soon as I get them aboard I'll come and call you. Come now.'

"He smiled at me like a little boy, and walked along as gentle as a lamb, and lay down on the bed as though he was indeed a child obeying a parent's orders. I saw his eye turn on the table top, and fearing not to do so, I gave him just a little out of his last bottle, pretending to stumble and spill the balance after he'd had a sip or two. But in my heart I began to feel a sort of joy arise. I had a sort of feeling that now, somehow, things were going to right themselves before so very long.

"The only thing that troubled me was about the two angels, as Wallie had described them to me. He said they both had long hair, sort of chestnut brown, and that their eyes were gray or green. It was up to me, and I knew it, to get two angels, just like that description. Well,

I produced them!

"It was about an hour before I called him, and by that time twilight had fallen. I was able by then to point out to Wallie, through the door of his state-room, standing at attention on the deck, the two angels he had mentioned. They were tall and rather powerful, these two Swedish angels from the fo'castle, signed as Olson and Larson; I had made their hair out of oakum.

"Wallie gave one glance at them and was entirely satisfied. Poor boy, everything was pretty much alike to him now. He did not even suspect anything when Olson touched his hat and said respectful, 'Come aboard, sir,' in a voice which to me seemed a little harsh for an angel.

"'It is my wish, Captain,' said Wallie,

gentle as a child, 'that you make these messengers comfortable. I would suggest that you offer them wine.'

"I heard Olson sort of gasp at this, and Larson gurgled in his throat, but I kicked each of them from behind as I stepped in the door.

"'Very good, Mr. Phelps,' said I. 'Is there anything else you would suggest?'

"Wallie looked at me with a sort of puzzled glance in his eye. It seemed as though there was a film over his eye, a film over his face, over his soul.

"'It seemed as though there was something that I ought to do—something that these angels have come to tell me to do,' he went on after a while.

"'Sit down and think it over, Wallie boy,' said I. 'I shouldn't wonder if there was something that ought to be done. If it should seem to you after a while that you had some duty to do, why, do it, my boy. That is what your father would like, and what I would like. Run your own vessel, boy.'

"'You'll see me through, will you, John, and you'll take me home?' He sat up, and I thought the film lifted. I only grasped his hand at that, and turned

awav.

"'Did you think I wasn't going to do it, John?' he asked of me at last, quiet-like.

"'No, my boy,' said I, without turning around. 'I knew you would when

the time came.'

""Will you promise me over again, John,' he says after a while again, 'that you will bury us together back home?"

"Then I knew he had loved her, after all, and I began to see how hard it had been for him; so I pardoned him in my heart.

"'In all human ways, Wallie,' I said to him. 'I'll do what you say, and as I

promise.'

""Is she in her room?' he asked, nodding back over his shoulders to his wife's stateroom. At the time he was opening the drawer of his desk and rolling the cylinder of a big Colt's—cap and ball they all were in those days.

"I don't think she is," I answered. 'I heard her talking—with him—on the lee

side of the deck, not so long ago.'

"Wallie nodded as if satisfied. 'The lady in question,' said he to me at length, 'is my wife. As I am, so is she. God do so to me. Now let us wait. The Lady Jane is yours, John,' said he. He reached over and handed me a signed paper giving me his ship, and I took the bill of sole owner. I knew he wished it so.

"So he sat down on the edge of his berth; and I stood there for what seemed the longest hour in all my life. A white moon was coming up now, and little by little the deck grew brighter. The air was soft and warm, like spring with us, but with more fire in the air.

"At last we heard her voice. She was coming around the turn of the promenade. Did I say she was speaking? It was not speech at all, but some low, inarticulate call, some sort of cry or purr—I don't know what to call it. And presently he, that other man, came from his room and joined her.

"They started down the deck toward the door just beyond us. I stepped back and motioned to Wallie. He got up quietly, and went out on deck in the moonlight, facing them. That I might be his witness, I stepped out and stood beside him.

"They came toward us in the moon, their arms about each other. Her hair was down, and spread over his shoulder like that of some savage woman of these parts and their faces were together. They didn't know we were there. Wallie spoke twice before they looked up, and even then they paced forward a step or two, because that was their fate. They all three always dressed for dinner. I could see her white neck over her white low cut gown. It showed the merest hollow, a little blue-black in the shadow, where the bones come together at the foot of the throat. I don't suppose I ever saw a more beautiful woman than she was as she appeared then. It was almost like a dream, some sort of trance. to see them coming on silent and to see Wallie standing there without a word of reproach, without a tremor in his hand, only looking sad at her and him. They had not yet even dropped their arms from about each other when he shot them.

"He killed her first. A little blue mark came out just below the blue shadow at the foot of her throat, and I saw it while she still stood there, half held up by his arm, though jarred by the blow of the ball. Then, just as he shrieked and started away, he shot him, too. French, I said, was in evening dress. There was a little black powder burn on his shirt front, and I saw that, too. They leaned together, but they were both dead on their feet in the twinkling of an eye.

"At the shots it seemed that silence was everywhere, even at the blocks and jaws and halyards. Then I heard feet begin to run. I met and ordered everybody back. I was master of the *Lady Jane*, and I made the men stand by as I ordered, and didn't let them do any talking together. Jim, my mate, I called in to help me.

"Her we put on Wallie's bed, where she belonged. French lay on the deck, till Wallie dragged him across and overboard.

"Wallie sat down on the edge of the berth for a little while, and I thought he was coming through all right, but by and by he began to sink, to drop down into himself, his hand still resting on her hair. He tried to smile, tried to drink, when I poured for him; but his head dropped back, and he went loose all over. So I put him up on the bed beside her.

"Then I remembered my promise. Here now was a man who had shown he was worth keeping faith with. Then I called for Jim Steffens, my first mate.

"'This particular kind of cholera, Jim,' said I, 'is very sudden. But I must have your word not to breathe a breath of this to the men.' Jim nodded to me, and I knew that part of it was safe.

"'Now, Jim,' said I, 'even in cholera certain disinfectants will serve, as you know. We've on board a lot of casks of Stockholm tar, and we've got a lot of crates and linens, all of which ought to have been delivered at Nagasaki or Hongkong. You see there on the bed the reason why they never were delivered. But we'll use some of them now, old man.

"'I want the two largest casks of tar

brought up here and broached, head in, careful,' says I. 'After you've done that, Jim, go on about your duties and leave

me alone for a while.'

"You see, my friend, the promise of a man has to be kept, no matter how hard it may seem. Even now, though I'm older, I'm only a poor sailorman, without much brains. But sailors travel. It was in the British Museum where I saw those old Egyptians, mummies, all done up in cloths and spices and linens, thousands of years old. I didn't put the best of any of those old Africans any ahead of what a good Yankee sailorman could do.

"When I had done what had to be done, I had there on the bed of Wallie's room two long white rolls of linen, snowy white, fold on fold, hundreds of folds deep, I suppose. And then I dropped them each in a barrel of the pure, clean tar. And I headed up the casks again.

"I sailed the Lady Jane for the Gate. And when I got there, I made such talk to the quarantine people that they let my casks come through. They themselves could have done no better, even

with the worst of cholera.

"'Jim,' said I then to my mate, 'the Lady Jane is yours. Sail her or sink her, as you please. To Hongkong or New York Bay, it nothing differs now. She's my first; I've run her, and I'm done with her now. It's quicker across by rail. What you know, you know; what I know, I know. Good-bye.'

"He never said a word, and we shook

hands.

"The railroad, as you will see, was young and slow at that time, forty-five years ago, but that was how I took them back home. As it had been cholera at 'Frisco, it must be cholera at New York. I never told the old man or Wallie's

mother the truth, of course. I'd kept my promise. They'd enough to bear as it was. I told them I thought so, too.

"Now this family came from east Massachusetts, and their burying ground was up Salem way, where so many sea following folk have come from, generations back. I took them there, the living and the dead, and it was my plan to put them away, my boy and her, just as they were; but Wallie's mother wouldn't listen to that. It was no use talking cholera to her, and no use telling her what had been done in order that her boy might come back to her.

"'He'll be white—he'll be white and clean,' she said over and over again. 'Nothing would touch him. He was so good. No wonder that she loved him. I shall see his face again.' Nor could any-

thing change her.

"I got down an undertaker from Boston. The truth was, as I must admit, I did not know which cask was Wallie's and which was hers, for I had forgot to mark them. But luck was with me. When we had undone the last of the bandages, there was Wallie's face, as his mother had said. And I give you my word, it was white and clean.

"When we buried him at last, he was smiling as though not ill content. I could hear service read over him. He'd run his own ship. I told his father that the boy had done his duty, and done it

well. That pleased him.

"We didn't unwrap her bandages; I wouldn't let them; so whether she was white or black I'll never know. They'll sleep on their honeymoon as they are a thousand years, and keep their secret with them. It's their own affair. It was his ship. He ran it. He can rest."



OTTLINGER—I have never seen that shade of hair go with that complexion before; have you?
STINGER—Only temporarily.

THE KING'S DEFENSE

By Max Rittenberg

IN the boudoir of Mademoiselle de Coulray, in the discreet little villa among the olive groves, King Michel was awaiting her return from rehearsal.

Meanwhile he had stretched himself lazily in an armchair in front of the fire, turning over the leaves of an illustrated journal. On a table by his side were a decanter of wine and some glasses, and from time to time he would sip at his glass in the manner of the connoisseur, giving each sip full opportunity to display its charms and graces to his trained palate before passing to oblivion.

King Michel had always been noted for the attention he paid to his creature comforts. Some of his little failings were hit off with startling candor in the rather scurrilous French weekly he was now reading. But the King had in addition an easy, jovial good nature which caused him to look upon the cartoons with the same broad tolerance that he extended to his own failings. He was smiling over the mordant cleverness of the caricatures when he heard the door suddenly open and shut again sharply.

He put down the journal and rose with dignity to face this impertinent intruder who had entered the boudoir of Mademoiselle de Coulray without permission.

It was one of his own footmen, holding a leveled revolver. The man's eyes flickered fanatical hatred at the King; he licked his thin lips in triumph as he snapped the lock of the door with a vicious click.

Behind the outward easy good nature of King Michel was a brain which worked with lightning speed on the spur of occasion. In a second he had taken in the reality of the situation, the imperative necessity of keeping cool and playing for time, the equally urgent necessity of causing no open scandal. Even if it were possible to have the man arrested forthwith, it would be highly undesirable. To have the matter of the little villa in the olive groves and Mademoiselle de Coulray dragged into the public courts was unthinkable.

It was characteristic of King Michel that his first feeling was not fear of a leveled revolver but exceeding annoyance at being cornered in that compromising situation. Assassination in the open street would have had no terror for him. But here, in this pink, fluffy boudoir, it outraged his sense of public decency.

However, he had himself well in hand within a second or two, and he remarked sternly: "You should have knocked and received permission to enter, Pietro. Remember that for the future!"

"There will be no future!" came the answer in a tone deep with fanatical determination. There was no trace of the servility of the servant in it.

King Michel noted the tone, and immediately decided on a change of front. This fellow must be talked to as a man and not as an underling, if anything were to be saved from the wreckage of the situation. So he replied: "That is, of course, a matter of individual opinion. But I understood that all my household were good Catholics—yourself included."

"That is why I have come to kill you."
"I fail to understand. Explain. Are you an anarchist?"

"No."

"A revolutionary of some kind?"

"Again, no."

"That seems interesting. Sit down and tell me your motives." King Michel turned his broad back and moved toward his armchair.

"Stop!" cried the man at the door, but the King took no notice, stretching himself comfortably in the armchair.

"Sit down," repeated the King, and indicated a chair on the other side of the hearthrug. The assassin obeyed reluctantly, but kept the revolver still

pointed at his master.

King Michel leisurely selected a fresh cigar from his pocket case and proceeded to clip the end and light it, not glancing up at his visitor until it was puffing in satisfactory fashion. Then he asked with an air of some curiosity: "Do you represent some association, or is this merely a private grudge of your own? I was under the impression that all my household were liberally treated."

"I am not your servant. I have worn your livery merely to find my opportunity. And now it has come. I am

here to kill you!"

"I was wondering if there had been by chance some misunderstanding which might be cleared up—some injustice I had unconsciously done you. Note that I am speaking to you freely—I will excuse any lack of ceremony on your part."

"Ceremony matters nothing. After you have said your last prayers, you will go to the eternal fires. My moment has been carefully chosen. Your Mademoi-

selle de-"

The King interrupted him sternly. "We will leave the lady out of our conversation. There are conventions to be

observed."

"I was saying that your mistress has been enticed away on a fool's errand," pursued the assassin with vindictive satisfaction in his voice. "She will not be here for a long hour. When she returns, there will be a little surprise for her. Oh, yes, a little surprise! And for the people of our country, too!"

The King took a sip from his glass of wine. "I still fail to grasp," he said, "what your object is in seeking this interview. Be frank—what do you wish

me to do for you?"

"Nothing."

"What injury have I done you?"
"Not to me—to your people."

King Michel looked him through and through, seeking the solution to the puzzle. "As reigns go," he answered slowly, watching the effect of each word, "my reign has been a good one. We have peace, prosperity and an excellent status in European estimation. As you must surely know, I have given my country alliances; I have founded universities; I have endowed research with a liberal hand; I have lightened taxation; I have beautified my capital; I have raised new ambitions in my people."

"It is easy to spend other people's money," sneered the visitor. Not for a moment did he cease to hold his finger on

the trigger of the revolver.

It irked the King exceedingly to have to defend his actions to a servant, but open scandal must be averted even if it meant a lowering of the barriers of dignity. So he replied evenly: "The peace I have helped to secure has meant prosperity for all. I have made for my people a hundred times more than I have ever spent. Look into the trade figures of the last fifteen years—they speak for themselves."

"And what of your private life? What of your hidden wickedness? What of your loathsome private vices? What of this villa and the woman who lives here?

Answer me that!"

King Michel looked at the fanatic through the tobacco smoke in real astonishment. "You want to shoot me

simply because of this villa?"

"Because of what it stands for. Because of the great and noble example it was your duty to set your people, and the low and vile example you have set them. Look at the pictures of yourself in that journal—there you see the truth!"

"As caricatures they are certainly very clever—I must buy some of that man's work. By the way, you are not

the artist, I suppose?"

"Enough of this foolery! I've not come here to be mocked. When you have said your last prayers, I shall shoot you."

"You misunderstand me. I am try-

ing to put myself in your place—to realize what your motives are. At present they are beyond me. Ah, I have an excellent idea! We will change places. You sit here; I will sit in your chair. Then you will feel more like the King and I more like the commoner."

"A trick to get my revolver—eh? Oh, I'm not as easy as you seem to im-

agine!"

"Please try to understand me, as I am trying to understand you. When you come to this table, you will find an electric bell attached to it. If I had wished to, I could have pressed it long ago. shall make no attempt to secure your revolver. Now come, give me my last wish and change places." He rose with dignity and motioned politely to the vacant chair. The fanatic hesitated, then moved his place, but still kept his revolver steadily trained upon the King.

"Now let us change coats," said King Michel, taking his own ample garment off and tossing it to his visitor. After another hesitation the latter complied, first taking care to remove from his pockets sundry papers and letters.

In other circumstances there might have been food for laughter in the rather ludicrous tightness of the man's coat on the King's broad figure, but here was deadly earnest on both sides.

"Pour yourself a glass of wine."

"I never drink." "A cigar?"

"I never smoke."

The King puffed at his own cigar meditatively. "I am beginning," he said, "to realize your feelings. This coat of yours—a trifle narrow for me—helps me in the endeavor. Now that I look over at the King sitting in his comfortable armchair with a decanter and glasses conveniently by his side, his comfortable lounge coat giving him all the ease he desires, I begin to understand how he must seem to your eyes. Let me describe him more fully."

He threw his cigar into the fire with a sudden gesture and sat upright in his chair. "I see a man in the prime of life, full-bodied and full-blooded. His appearance suggests that he eats too heartily, drinks too heartily, smokes too heartily, is too easy as to morals. Not a very prepossessing picture. No doubt his pages in the ledger of life make a poor showing."

"A son of sin!" interjected the fanatic. "A vile example to his people!"

"From your side, I see that point of view. Now I wonder if for a moment or two you can imagine yourself in my place? The clock is put back twentyfive years, and you are the Crown Prince, a young man in his early twenties. You have abundant leisure, few responsibilities, a full purse, innumerable flat-The aim of those around you is to anticipate everything you can possibly desire, and bring it to you almost before you ask for it.

"What has all this to do with me?"

"Everything. By the will of Providence you had the great good fortune to be born Pietro and not Prince Michel. But we are supposing that it was I who had the good fortune and you the bad. You are surrounded with temptations of the most refined and artistic order. The most beautiful women-"

"I should have thrust temptation aside and remembered my high destiny."

"Have you ever been tempted in that

way?"

"A prince is dedicated to his people—

his task is a sacred one!"

"I repeat, have you ever been tempted in that way? I can see that the answer is 'No.' But you have been tempted in other ways, have you not? You have, for instance, been tempted to come here to shed the blood of a fellow man."

"For a high purpose!"

"I want you to realize that you have

come to kill the wrong man."

The fanatic laughed harshly. "The wrong man! You are King?"

"Here, no. Here I am a man like other men. In public I am the King, and in public I am answerable for my actions as King."

"This is a splitting of straws!"

"The splitting of personality that lies with every man."

"A man is always himself."

"A man is two, three, four, a dozen selves. And the great question always is: which self is more vital for the public good?"

"A man should be always the one

self."

"Should be—ah, yes! But how many in history have fulfilled that ideal? You are a man who has read deeply, as I judge; look back upon history. In myself there is the King and that other, and of the two I have always looked upon the King as the vital personality. Already I have pointed out to you what I have done as King—how I have given my country peace and prosperity, have endowed learning and set on foot great movements for the public good. Let a man come to me with a great scheme for the public good, and he has all my attention and all my sympathy. From what you know by public report, and from what you have seen in the palace, tell me on your conscience if this is not the truth!"

For the first time the fanatic turned

his eyes away toward the fire.

King Michel continued after a silence pulsing with thought: "You know the character of my cousin and heir-apparent—a good, weak, pious, well-intentioned, vacillating figurehead. With him you will have in your King all the private virtues and all the public vices. Look back into history and tell me if such a man has ever made his people a great nation."

He rose to his full height, his bearing instinct with kingship even in that ludicrous tightness of a liveried coat. Looking at him, one saw only the face, as in the famous Boecklin portrait of

Mommsen.

"If, after what I have placed before you, you wish to shoot, then shoot now. I am an easy mark—you will not miss.

Shoot now, Pietro!"

The fanatic clenched and unclenched his left hand in an agony of indecision. "But you have not yet made your peace with God," he muttered.

"As a King I have no need to make my peace—my public life will speak for

me."

"But as a man-"

"The lesser part. Look on the bigger side of things, Pietro; train yourself to see the bigger side."

"I have been sent to kill you for your

sins."

"You misread your orders. Your mission is a greater one. Have you ever heard of my breaking my given word?"

"What is this leading up to?"
"I ask for your answer first."

"Well, no."

"You are right-I never break my word. And I propose this: that you be appointed as the footman to stand behind my carriage when I drive in state. Your revolver will be in your pocket; at any time you deem right you will be able to carry out your mission. The moment when your conscience, judging more justly than yourself, tells you that I have failed to do my public duty as King—that it is time for my successor to take the helm of state—at that moment you will press the trigger. Your mission will be a very high one; your responsibility a heavy one to shoulder. Have you the courage to accept it?"

"But this villa?"

"With my private life you have no concern. Yours is the higher duty of judging on my public life. Do you accept this great responsibility—can you rise to the noblest opportunity of all?"

The assassin put his revolver on the table and rose respectfully in the presence of his master. "Sire," said he, "I

accept."

When Mademoiselle de Coulray reached the little villa hidden in the olive groves, highly irritated at the trick of the false message that had been played upon her, she found King Michel in an unusually thoughtful mood.

"Mon Dieu, sire, what is the matter? You look as if you had seen a ghost!"

"I have been arranging, like the old Egyptians, for a skeleton at my feast."

"Quelle idéel You've not brought it

here, I hope!"

"No. Tomorrow I shall be out driving with it. Well, let us hope it will behave like a rational, sensible skeleton."

CHASSE INFERNALE

By Emery Pottle

THIS is not a story. It is a treatise—a moral treatise. If I were a better man myself, I'd make it a tract—a solemn warning—a pious invective. Its aim is to set forth the shocking lack of moral sense in my niece Hortense, and, deducing from long and harrowing experiences, in modern young females in general. As for the young male, nobody ever pretended he had a moral sense—except the author of the Rollo books.

When I was a short-trousered lad in the village of my birth, our Academy was wont to close its noble yearly efforts with a thrilling entertainment—to me at least-called mysteriously Commencement. One of the invariable features of this mixed spectacle of intellectual and social joys was "A duet, by - and -." As a rule, this duet was a lawless, violent beating up and down of the keyboard in search of prey, whose name we intrepidly but innocently pronounced, as it were, "The Shassy Infernal." I had intended to entitle this present pamphlet "An Immoral Adventure," but on reflection I decided that not only might it offend the delicate sensibilities of editors, but also it might, should it escape into print, deceive the readers by its light and affectedly humorous sound. And therefore, since it is to me gravely immoral, this shallow account, I have called it by the name you may have observed in the beginning, a name worthy of any tract, I consider. As for my own part in it, I wish to say before going further, I blush, I realize in humiliation that, despite my sadly thinning hair and rheumatic knee, I am no better than I should be. But I have repented, and my story in consequence will bear, I trust, the same fearful realism as might the "Confessions of a Reformed Drunkard."

The parents of Hortense—guileless creatures, little dreaming of the deprayed character of their sole offspring -took last autumn for two months a villa on the Lake of Como, in fact, at Cadenabbia. If you know the lake, you will remember how pleasing is the prospect of that hotel village and how it speaks to the soul. At least it spoke to the soul of Longfellow, who wrote a sentimentally descriptive poem of his ardent emotions at beholding it. It seems always the fairest scene that hides in its bosom the liveliest asp. Or is it the unnatural juxtaposition of the asp and the bosom which upsets our sense of values? In any case, it was there that I came as the guest of the family, and there was the field of the chasse infernale.

I had not been under the roof a week when the Ansteys appeared in their roaring red motor car-old Anstey, his wife and their boy Philip-en route for one of their godless trumpeting raids up and down Italy. Poor old Italy! I dislike intensely the father and mother Anstey, but the young man seems to me a very good sort. I said as much to Hortense after four or five days of his society, during which period he contrived to enamor himself piteously of that young woman. And she, who had disgracefully done all in her power to hasten his doom, made a wry mouth and remarked: "Oh, yes, he's a nice boy, but a good deal of a bore, don't you think?"

"My God!" I reflected piously. "And there are those who talk of the beauties of youth!"

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However, the matter ended for the moment in the Ansteys inviting Roger and Charlotte to accompany them down to Florence for a week's jaunt. I induced them to accept, to rid myself of the sound of the parents and the sight of the lovelorn Philip-he, poor devil, kept me up until two the night before the departure dismally repeating to me the wild story of his heart. They set off the next morning with much useless tooting and, on the part of Charlotte, many impressive warnings to me to care fondly for her beloved child. The one really placed person in the lot of us was the beloved child who repulsively made a gay eye at a passing callow youth of her acquaintance, under the very nose of Philip.

"Wretched girl," said I, as the motor grunted off toward Colico-"and one still hears of the oppressed conditions of

the female!"

Hortense giggled.

"It is as I have repeatedly affirmed," I continued, seating myself on the sunny wall by the roadside and lighting my matutinal pipe: the young woman of today is a lightheaded, shallow, selfish, spoiled, immoral product, without the least conception of the gravity, the dignity of life, or the nobility of love."

"And then?" she questioned de-

murely.

"And then? God forgive us, we marry you!"

"It's your own fault."

"My poor child, like the majority of your sex you are unable to distinguish between a fault and a misfortune. For some mysterious, inexplicable reason some on the ground that this life is a school for saints—the male is obsessed from birth by a hankering for the female. And so strong does this become at times that he has the awful hardihood to lead her before a fearsome gentleman in a kind of white nightie, who, in a few terrible words, renders him, tied hand and foot, to the lady."

"It's no picnic for the lady, uncle

"It's no picnic for anybody! Run along and buy me that loathsome daylate newspaper that I may read the arrivals at the Paris hotels and what Mrs. Millions ate for her lunch vesterday at Newport."

"Speaking of picnics—you can read it in the launch."

"Launch! What launch?"

"I've ordered the Bellevue launch for the day. We're going on a picnic, just you and I together. Doesn't that sound

too nice for words?"

"My child, there are very few things in this world too nice for words, and picnics are not one of them. My distaste for the picnic is exceeded only by my distaste for launches. This you know. Therefore when you tell me in cuddling words that it is a just-you-and-I-together affair, I put no faith in your statement."

"Uncle!"

"I know, my dear, your shocked and affronted state, but let us pass at once to the essence of the matter. I am not another Philip. Why this unnatural desire for picnics?"

Hortense sulked for an "You're horrid!"

"Out with it!"

She smiled ravishingly. "I thought it would be nice to spend a lovely long day with you on the lake, but, of course,

"Spend the entire day out there on that motionless, glaring, sun-blistered sheet of water! In a jerky little boat! Alone with me! Ah, no, my child, that's too thin. The truth, shameful as it may be, but the truth!"

She tried not to laugh, but the effort

was vain.

"We're going to Varenna," she stated with effrontery, "to lunch. Then we shall take the little train and go to Servio to the golf links. And we'll be home nicely for dinner."

"I shall be home nicely for dinner because I sha'n't have left home all day,"

I replied coldly.

"Oh, yes, you will have," she answered with menacing sweetness. "Besides, I've told the cook she could go for the day."

"There are hotels."

"Oh, uncle dear, don't be nasty. Please, please be nice to me."

"I forbid you to speak in that tone.

It is utterly insincere, but it somehow weakens me, as well you know. Why, I ask, do you want to go to this Varenna and this golf links? That is, I don't ask—I know. There's another unfortunate youth lurking in the shrubbery. I've gone through a week with Anstey. I tell you, I'll have no more of it. No Varenna!"

She cast her flimsy wrappings to the

winds. "Uncle, he's divinel"

"All the more reason for letting him alone then. To accomplish anything in your nefarious line, you must have weak

humanity."

At this point Hortense's "most intimate friend" Stephanie came, as Hornells would say, tilting down the road. She is another one just like Hortense, though she lacks her executive abilities. She nodded sweetly but pityingly. I am—at forty-five—to them much as the ruins of an old temple d'amour in a forsaken garden.

"Going?" she inquired.

"Uh-huh."
"When?"
"Now."

"We're not going anywhere," I put in savagely.

They giggled.

"He's stuffy," explained Hortense. Stephanie nodded.

"What if he shouldn't be there, Ten-

sie?"

"He's sure to. It's tournament."

"Oh, my dear, how exciting! I wish I could go."

"My dear, if you could! Do you sup-

pose he'll recognize me?"

"Of course! You ought to have seen him stare at the back of your neck in church on Sunday!"

"Did he? Oh, Steph, do come with

us!"

"Can't. Mamma's on the war path today. Just because I danced four times with Frederic. I've got to go to an old tea place with her and those awful Kidder creatures this afternoon. Isn't it sickening?"

"Who is this young godlike being?" I asked with a semblance of indifference. Stephanie was as blithe as a whistling hangman. "That's just the point. We

don't know. He's awfully gone on Tensie. Just stares and stares at her every Sunday. He's English, and he comes to church with the Varenna people in the hotel launch. Perfectly corking looking!

"Oh, there's mamma prancing up and down looking for me! If you should happen to see Frederic, Tensie, tell him I can't get away today. Good luck.

dear!"

When I could command my indignation and horror I spoke. "So that's it, is it?"

Hortense ceased humming. "What's

it?" she inquired vaguely.

"Whatever it is, I'm not it, young woman. I refrain from saying what I think of your monstrous conduct, because I know how useless would be my remarks. But let me impress upon you this fact: if you think for an instant that I am to be a party to this infamous, shameless excursion, you are colossally mistaken."

"Don't fuss, uncle; it's too hot. Here comes the launch. We'd better start at

once; it's nearly lunch time."

"I refuse to go."

"Very well, dear; I'll go alone." She descended the landing stairs with a light, conscienceless step and seated herself in the boat. "Come, uncle; I'm all ready." In a lower tone she added: "I'll give you just two minutes."

Hortense was perfectly capable of departing alone—and she knew I knew it. She had me. At the expiration of the two minutes I embarked, prickly with wrath. During the run to Varenna she chatted with infantile gusto and perilous charm on a variety of subjects, quite oblivious, apparently, of my out-

raged silence.

After one of the worst lunches I have ever eaten, Hortense added to my pangs of indigestion the humiliation of beholding her suddenly slip supinely to the floor of the well filled salon and lay her head upon the seat of her chair. "I must sleep," she murmured. Like Jacob in the pictured Bible of childhood, she lay and slept. She has the strange—aptitude shall I call it?—of sleeping when and where it occurs to her. I went out

on the terrace to hide my shame. When I returned she had awakened, arranged her hair and powdered her nose; she was sinfully lovely, I must admit, and exhaled an air of conquest.

"His name is Norrie," she whispered

excitedly.

"How do you know?"

"I described him to the porter. He told me. He's at the links."

"My heavens! Have you no sense of

decency?"

"Pooh, the porter's Swiss! You can ask anything of a Swiss porter. That's

why they're porters."

I disregarded this anthropologic item. "Once more I beg of you to give up this immoral hunt. I refuse to go to the links. I won't let you go."

Her eyes twinkled. "Then I'll have

to go alone, dear uncle."

To my damnation, I confess it, I laughed. And if once you have laughed in the company of sinners you're a sharer in their evil deeds. Of what use then to protest further? I boarded the train with Hortense.

As we hobbled along the narrow, hot, cobbled paths of Servio that lead down to the flat sandy peninsula of the links stretching out into the lake, Hortense gave me a tender glance of commiseration. "Poor old dear thing, you're such an angel to come."

"Angel? Egyptian slave at the chariot's tail! This is no place for an angel."

"Don't worry, uncle; I really sha'n't

do a thing to disgrace you."

"Man looketh at the outward appearance, but your Creator looks at your heart, my wayward child."

"Yes, I know," she murmured absently. "Is my hat straight?"

I sighed my assent.

We advanced upon the links. The Servio course is artfully constructed in an economical scale in such a way that if the lines of the falls were visible in the air they would form a tidy little cobweb over one's head. Space is thus saved and the danger of sudden death pleasantly enhanced. We proceeded warily amid shouts and curses from the players. Unexpectedly Hortense nudged me. In the near distance I perceived a young man. He approached, so far as I could see, with a blithe, unsuspicious air—a large, bony, blond, pleasant-faced English youth, with huge red hands and stiff joints. Just as surely, thought I, are you advancing to your end as were the early Christian martyrs in the Roman arena.

I covertly regarded Hortense. And I gasped in amazement. She lacked but the pantalettes to have appeared a shrinking maiden of the bygone thirties. A touch to her hat, a droop to her eyes, a timid shoulder pressed against my arm, the modest folded hands-and there she was! I had a passionate desire to shake her. I felt a traitor to my sex not to do so.

The youth's ball landed almost at our feet. As he strode up for his shot Hortense for one fateful instant raised her eves, then let them fall and edged closer to me for protection. And that was all.

I have not the heart to go into what then took place before us. It was a horrid, lacerating scene, and I was fain to turn away in anguish. Not so Hortense. The young man struck thrice at the innocent white pellet; thrice he missed it. Sweat dripped from his crimson freckled face; the stem of his pipe parted in his grinding jaws. About us was the silence of death. The fourth time the savage iron fell upon the ball and slew it. The wretched thing tried to escape, rolled forward in horrible agony, then—no, I cannot proceed. And through it stood that miserable girl, her eyes, wide and childlike, on all the ghastly details. Of course what the youth should have done before leaving the spot was to turn and fell her to the ground with his lofter.

When it was over and passed and naught remained save the bruised turf, she remarked casually: "What do you suppose made him go up in the air like

that?"

I gazed at her as one looks upon the face of a famous criminal—with repulsion and unhealthy curiosity. "Don't speak to me! I always felt I was right not to marry; now I know it for sure."

Destiny, as not infrequently happens, good folk to the contrary, aided the wicked that day. In the fringe of "gallery" that followed the players was Miss Peevey. It was no surprise to see her. She's the sort of American nomadic, eyelassed, badly dressed spinster that one might expect to encounter in any accessible quarter of the globe—friendly of spirit, loose of tongue, virtuous as the common sense shoes on her feet. She hailed me.

"Wasn't it awful about poor Mr. Norrie?" she began breathlessly. "And he had the match all won! I don't know what in the world got into him. He's a splendid player. Why, I think it's just

awful—and he's so nice."

I shot an accusing glance at Hortense. She was looking at the blue water.

"Isn't that your niece?"

I reluctantly admitted the fact and

introduced her to Miss Peevey.

"Is it?" I caught later. "Maurice?... Oh, Norrie!... No, I don't think I was watching very closely—the view is so heavenly from the links... Really, in our little church at Cadenabbia? How funny! Oh, I'm sure you must be mistaken... Oh, no, I only play a very little—"

I lifted my eyes desperately to heaven. "Only a little"—and she can drive al-

most as well as a man!

After that I sank into a sort of apathetic state, giving but little heed to ensuing events. I know we went to tea at the little clubhouse with Miss Peevey, and were overcrowded with food and introductions. I know we made the acquaintance of Norrie. And I know that, such is the contemptible fiber of the male soul, instead of spurning Hortense from him, he abstracted her from meor very likely she did the abstraction for both—and raced ahead with her to the station, leaving me with Miss Peevey and her lunch basket and her indefatigable conversation, to follow on behind. My moral sense had by this time become so violated and deranged that I gave scant heed to the passing events. I have a nebulous notion that he wrung my hand at parting and said he'd see me soon again. From which I gathered that Hortense had not wasted her time.

"I hope you're satisfied with your

thoroughly reprehensible day," I remarked when we were homeward bound in the launch. "You, a motherless and fatherless girl!"

"I'm not, at any rate, uncleless. I shouldn't have dreamed of going if you had not brought me," she responded

virtuously. "Dear uncle!"

"It is with difficulty that I restrain myself from casting you into the lake," I cried. But I realized that there was not the fine ring of sincerity in the words. I was culpable; I should have seized her forcibly, in the beginning, and locked her in her room. And I knew it.

The next day but one arrived young Norrie. They were immodestly telling each other things about their souls over the tea table when I turned up. I know; I've told them myself. They were very polite, and forced tea and cakes upon me as if I were the guest and they the hosts. I saw they hoped I'd go, but I had no intention of that.

"Mr. Norrie whistles beautifully, uncle," said Hortense.

"He what?"

"Whistles—it's too lovely, Miss Peevey says."

"Oh, I say!" blushed Norrie.

"Now don't be teased; I can't bear it. Please go straight to the piano, Mr. Norrie."

He went, with alacrity, indeed.

If there is anything I can't support with Christian calm it is what is known as "parlor tricks," and I distrust young men who are thus proficient. The spectacle, for instance, of a strong, lusty male sitting at the piano and blowing forth from ridiculous pursed lips the "Angel's Serenade" is both embarrassing and enervating to me. I do not know how to cope with such a situation. I bore however, with some politeness, the "Serenade" and also Rubinstein's "Melody in F;" but when there was talk of the Intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana" I fled. I'd let my only daughter marry the coachman, if she insisted upon it, sooner than be "the gooseberry" in such a demoralized atmosphere.

That evening over the coffee Hortense imparted to me the news that she had invited the young man to dine with us on Saturday, the night of the Golf Club ball. I maintained a dignified silence.

"He's awfully nice and simple," she

added.

"He's simpatico.

"And very musical.

"He's an only son.

"His father is a barrister."

"See here; it's none of my affair I suppose, but have you any idea of enamoring yourself of that great, red-handed wide, awkward, insular, whistling creature?" I broke out at last.

"Uncle! He's a dear!"

"Be that as God wills. I wish to know your intentions. Business or no?"

There was a long pause. "N-n-n-o, I

suppose not."

"Then what in the name of decency do you mean by your performances?"

She cast down her reproachful eyes. "I—I just thought it would be sort of pleasant if he—he—fell a little in love with me."

"Suppose he fell in head over heels?"
"Oh, uncle, do you think he would?
What would he do?" she cried in glad abandon.

"Miserable girl!" I exclaimed. "Out

of my sight!"

She kissed me on the end of my nose and ran off. After all, I reflected sadly, there's no getting round the fact that nobody has ever really reformed a pretty girl; and it isn't worth the trouble to

reform a plain one.

During the week there was a great deal of whistling in the house. I endeavored to extract a few lucid opinions on the affair from Stephanie, but all I succeeded in getting was that she considered Tensie perfectly shockingly dreadful for going on like that with that poor man, and that he was perfectly desperately gone on Tensie. Which from an adverbial standpoint might have been interesting, but from no other. On the day of the ball my niece informed me curtly that Mr. Norrie was not dining with us. I thanked Providence for being spared again from the Intermezzo or worse and made no inquiries. We spent a silent day, ate a silent dinner together, and later set out for the festivities. I've never seen that worthless young woman look so enchanting as she looked that night. I said as much. She squeezed my hand affectionately.

"I feel sort of lonesome, uncle dear,"

she said meekly.

"Now here is the first really dangerous

symptom," said I nervously.

Norrie and two females were directly in our path as we entered. Hortense's eye measured them like lightning. saw the drooping bow of her mouth magically bent back to its wonted gay angle. She passed them with a bright little nod, cool, confident, and the swains then waiting encircled her. Later the young man approached me and asked if he might present me to his friends. They were English-mother and daughter. By their appearance I judged the father to be a curate. The mother was stout and red of skin and noisy with little chains and bangles. The daughter had protruding teeth and wore limp white muslin with emerald green bows and a great many meaningless ruffles in the wrong places. She must have been very strong in spite of her lean figure, for the marbly beads on her person could have weighed not less than twenty pounds. She thought the lake "too awfully jolly." I avoided young Norrie's eyes as much as I could. And he avoided mine.

"Who's that unfortunate girl with Norrie? And why doesn't Hortense dance or talk with him?" I demanded later of Stephanie, as she passed. "He hasn't left his burden once."

"It's his fiancée," she whispered in a

shocked voice.

"Didn't Hortense know?" I asked

vaguely.

"No—not till today. They came unexpectedly. And he had to tell. Isn't it awful?"

"Awful for him. Serves Tensie jolly

well right."

"Oh, Tensie doesn't care, now she's seen her!" and Stephanie danced off.

That's the end of it. Except for the fact that last night I saw Hortense—she's engaged to Philip Anstey now, and a nice time he's having of it—and I said idly: "What ever became of that whistling boy who was at Varenna last year?"

She blushed slightly. "I don't know. I suppose he's in England."

"Did he ever marry that afflicted creature he brought to the ball?"

"I believe not."

"Why not?"
"How should I know?"

"How do you know he didn't?"

"Well, he—wrote me—he wasn't going to."

"Why?"
No answer.

"On account of you?"

"He-he said so. I don't believe it,

though."

"You do believe it! Look what a beastly mess you made of that whole thing—just out of silly caprice!" She plucked up spirit. "Mess? What mess? Do you suppose he'd have been happy with that—that Gorgon-faced girl? Certainly not. And if I really broke it up he has nothing to say but 'Thank you,' unless he's a maniac. My conscience is perfectly clear."

I said at the beginning that this was not a story, but a treatise on the dreadful morals of nice young girls. It seems to me that I have not deceived my readers. The only trouble is that the people who read moral treatises are fearfully moral, anyway, and the immoral people only read stories—so I doubt if I shall have done any good at all by narrating the deplorable case of Hortense.



A SYMPHONY

By Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

TODAY a symphony,
An ecstasy of sound, a rushing sea
Of tonal wonder through the trees!
Truly are these
The flutes Aeolian,
And Pan
The piper of lost melodies!

Winds all day long,
Sweeping the branches on a thousand strings
Of myriad notes; and, tremulous, the song
Of birds in haunting harmony,
Floods of full sound, piercing and strong,
Yet laden with a tenderness that sings
Into the soul—an undertone
Poignant as memory;
A sweetness blown
Across discordant years,
Caught from the rhythm of the chanting spheres!

It must be Pan, indeed!
For now the dusk unveils the evening star,
And as a dream
The winds blend into one exquisite theme—
Then faint afar
Like the low piping of a shepherd's reed.

ROMANCE OF EARTH

By Charles Livingston Snell

When stars sail forth on seas of amethyst,
I lie along the hills in soft array
Of mist—my clinging slumber robe of mist.

The spirit of the yearning earth am I,
A star within the harem of my King;
Uncounted dawns have heard my waking cry,
Uncounted nights have watched my slumbering.

I lie along the hills through all the night; My lover comes at dawn—I hear afar The rushing of his chariot! With might He twangs his bow and cleaves the morning star.

The herald breeze has wound his silver horn
And sped above the trees with winged feet.
I palpitate with yearnings of the morn;
My eyelids flutter. Love, thy kiss is sweet.

Ah! Now he draws my robe of mist away! He casts himself upon the hills with me, And born of our great passion is the day, Born of the sun and earth and mystery!

I quiver with my mighty lord's caress;
He kisses every curve of vale and hill.
Revealing all my trembling loveliness,
I breathless yield me to his lordly will.

I swoon upon the purple hills. Alas, My lover goes! The steeds of light await His lash of crimson fire, ere they pass The clouded portals of the western gate.

He holds me close, then kisses me farewell;
His coursers tread the clouds with hoofs of gold;
I lie upon my couch of asphodel,
And draw my robe about me, fold by fold.

I swoon upon the hills. My eyes are dewed
With happy tears; my bosom heaves and falls
With memory of love's sweet plenitude. . . .
Within the forest deep a wood dove calls.

THE LACK OF IMAGINATION AMONG MILLIONAIRES

By Richard Le Gallienne

CONSIDERING the truly magical power of money, it must often have struck the meditative mind—particularly that class of meditative mind whose wealth consists chiefly in meditation—to what thoroughly commonplace uses the modern millionaire applies the power that is his: in brief, with what little originality, with what a pitiful lack of imagination, he spends his money. One seldom hears of his doing a novel or striking thing with it.

On the contrary, he buys precisely the same things as his fellow millionaires, the same stereotyped possessions -houses in Fifth Avenue and Newport, race horses, automobiles, boxes at the Opera, diamonds and dancing girls; and whether, as the phrase is, he makes good use of his wealth, or squanders it on his pleasures, the so-called good or bad uses are alike drearily devoid of individuality. Philanthropist or profligate, the modern millionaire is one and the same in his lack of initiative. Saint or sinner, he is one or the other in the same tame imitative way.

The rich men of the past, the splendid spendthrifts of antiquity, seem usually to have combined a gift of fancy with their wealth, often even something like poetry; and their extravagances, however extreme, had usually a saving grace of personal whim to recommend them to lovers of the picturesque. Sardanapalus and Heliogabalus may have been whatever else you please, but they were assuredly not commonplace; and the mere mention of their names vibrates with mankind's perennial gratitude for splen-

dor and colossal display, however perverse, and even absurd. The princes of the Italian Renaissance were, of course, notable examples of the rich man as fantasist, probably because they had the good sense to seek the skilled advice of poets and painters as to how best to make an artistic display of their possessions. Alas, no millionaire today asks a poet's or painter's assistance in spending his money; yet, were the modern millionaire to do so, the world might once more be delighted with such spectacles as Leonardo devised for the entertainments at the Villa Medici—those fanciful banquets, where, instead of a mere vulgar display of Medici money-"a hundred dollars a plate," so to say whimsical wit and beauty entered into the creation of the very dishes. Leicester's famous welcoming of Elizabeth to Kenilworth was perhaps the last spectacular "revel" of its kind to strike the imagination; though we must not fail to remember with gratitude the magnificent Beckford, with his glorious "rich man's folly" of Fonthill Abbey, a lordly pleasure house which naturally sprang from the same Aladdin-like fancy which produced "Vathek."

I but mention one or two such typical examples at random to illustrate the difference between past and present. At present the rich man's paucity of originality is so painful that we even welcome a certain millionaire's penchant for collecting fleas—he, it is rumored, having paid as much as a thousand dollars for specimens of a particularly rare species. It is a passion perhaps hard to understand, but, at least, as we say, it is

"different." Mr. Carnegie's more comprehensible hobby for building libraries shows also no little originality in a man of a class which is not as a rule devoted to literature. Another millionaire I recently read of, who refused to pay the smallest account till it had run for five vears, and would then gladly pay it, with compound interest at five per cent, has something refreshing about him; while still another rich eccentric, who has lived on his yacht anchored near the English coast for some fifteen or so years in order to avoid payment of his American taxes, and who occasionally amuses himself by having gold pieces heated white hot and thrown into the sea for diving boys to pick them up, shows a quaint ingenuity which deserves our gratitude. Another modern example of how to spend, or waste, one's money picturesquely was provided by the late Marquis of Anglesey, a young lord generally regarded as crazy by an ungrateful England. Perhaps it was a little crazy in him to spend so much money in the comparatively commonplace adventure of taking an amateur dramatic company through the English provinces, he himself, I believe, playing but minor roles, but lovers of Gautier's "Le Capitaine Fracasse" will see in that but a charmingly boyish desire to translate a beloved dream into a reality—though his creditors probably did not take that Neither, one can surmise, did those gentlemen sufficiently appreciate his passion for amassing amazing waistcoats, of which some seven hundred were found in his wardrobe at his lamented death, or strange and beautiful walking sticks, a like prodigious collection of which were among the fantastic assets which represented his originally large personal fortune on the winding up of his earthly affairs. Among these unimaginative creditors were, doubtless, many jewelers who found it hard to sympathize with his lordship's genial after-dinner habit, particularly when in the society of fair women, of plunging his hand into his trousers pocket and bringing it forth again brimming over with uncut precious stones of many colors, at the same time begging his companion to

take her choice of the moonlit rainbowed things. The Marquis of Anglesey died at the early age of twenty-nine, much lamented, as I have hinted—by his creditors, but no less sincerely lamented, too, by those for whom his flamboyant personality and bizarre whims added to that gaiety of nations sadly in need today of such figures. A friend of mine owns two of the wonderful waistcoats. Sometimes he wears one as we lunch together, and on such occasions we always drink in silence to the memory of his fantastic lordship.

These examples of rich men of our own time who have known how to spend their money with whim and fancy and flourish are but exceptions to my argument, lights shining, so to say, in a great darkness. As a general rule, it is the poor or comparatively poor man, the man lacking the very necessary material of the art, who is an artist of this kind. It is the man with but little money who more often provides examples of the delightful way of spending it. I trust that Mr. Richard Harding Davis will not resent my recalling a charming feat of his in this connection. Of course Mr. Davis is by no means a poor man, as all we who admire his writings are glad to know. Still, successful writer as he is, he is not vet, I presume, on a Carnegie or Rockefeller rating; and, at the time which I am about to recall, while already famous and comparatively prosperous, he had not attained that security of position which is happily his today. suppose it was some twelve or fifteen years ago-and of course I am only recalling a story well known to all the world—that, chancing to be in London, and wishing to send a surprise message to a lady in Chicago who afterward became his wife, he conceived the idea of sending it by messenger boy from Charing Cross to Michigan Avenue; and so the little lad, in the well known uniform of hurry, sped across the sea, as casually as though he were on an errand from Charing Cross to Chancery Lane, raced across nearly half the continent, as casually as though he were on an errand from Wall Street to Park Row, and finding the proper number in Michigan

Avenue, placed the far traveled letter in the lady's hand, no doubt casually asking for a receipt. This I consider one of the most romantic compliments ever paid by a lover to his lady. What millionaire ever had a fancy like that?

Or what millionaire ever had a fancy like this? There was living in New York some ten years ago a charming actor, not unknown to the public and much loved by his friends for, among his other qualities, his quaint whims. Good actor as he was, like many other good actors he was usually out of an engagement, and he was invariably poor. It was always his poorest moment that he would choose for the indulgence of an odd, and surely kindly, eccentricity. He would half starve himself, go without drinks, forswear tobacco, deny himself car fares, till at last he had saved up five This by no means easy feat accomplished, he would have his fivedollar bill changed into five hundred pennies, filling his pockets with which, he would sally forth from his lodging, and, seeking neighborhoods in which children most abound, he would scatter his arduously accumulated largess among the scrambling boys and girls, literally happy as a king to watch the glee on the young faces at the miraculous windfall. We often wondered that he was not arrested for creating a riot in the public streets, a disturber of the public traffic. Had some millionaire passed by on one of those ecstatic occasions, there is no question but that he would have been promptly removed to Bellevue as a dangerous lunatic.

Or what millionaire ever had a fancy like this? Passing along Forty-second Street one afternoon, I came upon a little crowd, and joining it, I found that it was grouped in amused curiosity, and with a certain kindness, round an old hatless Irishman, who was leaning against a shop front, weeping bitterly, and, of course, grotesquely. The old man was very evidently drunk, but there was something in his weeping deeply pitiful for all that. He was drunk, for certain; but no less certainly he was very unhappy—unhappy over some mysterious something that one or two

kindly questioners tried in vain to discover. As we all stood helplessly looking on and wondering, a tall, brisk young man, of the lean, rapid, few-worded American type, pushed in among us, took a swift look at the old man, thrust a dollar bill into his hand, said "Forget it"—no more—and was gone like a flash on his way. The old man fumbled the note in a daze, but what chiefly interested me was the amazed look on the faces of the little crowd. It was almost as if something supernatural had happened. All eyes turned quickly to catch sight of that strange young man; but he was already far off striding swiftly up the street. I have often regretted that I checked my impulse to catch up with him-for it seemed to me, too, that I had never seen a stranger thing. Pity or whim or whatever it was, did ever a millionaire do the like with a dollar, create such a sensation or have so much fun with so small a sum? No: millionaires never have fancies like that.

Another poor man's fancy is that of a friend of mine, a very poor young lawyer, whose custom it is to walk uptown from his office at evening, studying the faces of the passers-by. He is too poor to afford dollar bills. He must work his miracles with twenty-five-cent pieces, or even smaller coins; but it is with this art of spending money as with any other art: the greatness of the artist is shown by his command over an economy of material; and the amount of human happiness to be evoked by the dispensation of a quarter into the carefully selected hand, at the artistically chosen moment, almost passes belief. Suppose, for example, you were a sandwich man on a bleak winter day, an old weary man, with hope so long since faded out of your heart that you would hardly know what the word meant if you Thought chanced to read it in print. too, is dead within you, and feeling even so numbed that you hardly suffer any more. Practically you are a man who ought to be in your coffin—at peace in Potter's field—who, by the mere mechanic habit of existence, mournfully parades the public streets, holding up a banner with some strange device, the scoff of the pitiless wayfarer—as like as not supporting against an empty stomach the savory advertisement of some newly opened restaurant. Suppose you were that man, and suddenly through the thick hopelessness, muffling you around as with a spiritual deafness, there should penetrate a kind voice saying: "Try and keep up your heart, friend; there are better days ahead;" and with the voice a hand slipping into yours a coin, and with both a kind smile, a cheery "Good-bye," and a tall, broadshouldered figure, striding with long, so to say, kindly legs up the street—gone almost before you knew he was there. I think it would hardly matter to you whether the coin were a quarter or a dime; but what would matter would be your amazement that there still was any kindness left on the earth; and perhaps you might almost be tempted to believe in God again. And then-well, what would it matter to anyone what you did with your miraculous coin? This is my friend's favorite way of spending his money. To the extent of his poor means he has constituted himself the Haroun Al Raschid of the sandwich men.

After all, I suppose that most of us, if put into the possession of great wealth, would find our greatest satisfaction in the spending of it much after the fashion of my poor lawyer friend—that is, in the artistic distribution of human happiness. I do not, of course, for a moment include in that phrase those soulless systems of philanthropy by which a solid block of money on the one side is applied to the relief of a solid block of human misery on the other, useful and much to be appreciated as such mechanical charity of course is. It is not, indeed, the pious use of money that is my theme, but rather how to get the most fun, the most personal and original fun, out of it.

The mention of the great caliph suggests a role which is open to any rich man to play, the role of the Haroun Al Raschid of New York. What a wonderful part to play! Instead of loitering away one's evenings at the club, to doff one's magnificence and lose oneself in the great nightly multitude of the great city, wandering hither and thither,

watching and listening, and, with one's chequebook for a wand, play the magician of human destinies-bringing unhoped-for justice to the oppressed, succor as out of heaven to the outcast, and swift retribution, as of sudden lightning, to the oppressor. To play Providence in some tragic crisis of human lives; at the moment when all seemed lost to step out of the darkness and set all right with a touch of that magic wand. To walk by the side of lost and lonely men, an unexpected friend; to scribble a word on a card and say, "Present this tomorrow morning at such a number Broadway and see what will happen," and then to disappear once again into the darkness. To talk with sad, wandering girls, and arrange that wonderful new hats and other forms of feminine hope shall fall out of the sky into their lonely rooms on the morrow. To be the friend of weary workmen and all that toil by night while the world is asleep in soft beds. To come upon the hobo as he lies asleep on the park bench and slip a purse into his tattered coat, and perhaps be somewhere by to see him wake up in the dawn, and watch the strange antics of his joy—all unsuspected as its cause. To go up to the poor pushcart man, as he is being hurried from street corner to street corner by the police, and say: "Would you like to go back to Italy? Here is a steamer ticket. A boat sails for Genoa tomorrow. And here is a thousand dollars. It will buy you a vineyard in Sic-Go home and bid the signora get ready." And then to disappear once more, like Harlequin, to flash your wand in some other corner of the human multitude. Oh, there would be fun for one's money, something worth while having money for!

I offer this suggestion to any rich man who may care to take it up, free of charge. It is a fascinating opportunity, and its rewards would be incalculable. At the end of the year how wise one would be in the human story—how filled to overflowing his heart with the thought of the joy he would thus have brought to so many lives—all, too, in pure fun, himself having had such a good time all the while!

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AWAY

By Ann Mazzanovich and Grace Duffie Boylan

EVEL fields under a brazen sky; from east to west no river; north or south no hill to make a shadow; yellow above, below. No breeze stirred. Over the sounding board of the plain came the beat of hoofs galloping. A woman rode out of a cloud of dust at the fork of the ways. She was on a farm horse, heavy-footed.

Her face, in the tunnel of the sunbonnet, was wrinkled by the acrid winds of twenty years—twenty years on the prairie. Her calico gown hung limply around her slender form as she drew up

and looked about her.

"Jest one tree," she said aloud, glancing contemptuously at the single cotton-wood that drooped over a dry channel. "But it'll give a little shade to ole Bob. I'll hitch him here. I reckon I kin hoof it the few miles further to the deepo. I reckon I kin—after the work I'm used to!"

She spoke bitterly, the dust on her

lips burning.

She dismounted. And the horse, his lean sides heaving, turned his hanging head and looked at her. His eyes had compassion in their depths. She laid her face against his, her arm over his neck; and for a few moments they stood thus together.

"You know it, don't you? Don't never be mad at me because I went. Remember I jest had to. Don't never be mad

at me, will you?"

In his way he conveyed an assurance of unchanging love. She was comforted.

She put the halter around the tree and tied it lightly.

"This ain't no real tether, Bob," she said to the horse apologetically. "You kin git away the minute you want to. An' I sure wish you'd hike back to the ranch; I don't want to be took fur hoss stealin'. That's something he never would furgive, nohow."

She completed the knot, and with another good-bye was away down the glittering road—a lone figure, prematurely bent; a shabby woman following her grotesque onmoving shadow; and around her and the voiceless shape that

kept ahead, the hot silence.

A sound cut the air:

"Come back! Come back!"

She started forward, running a short way in protesting fear. Then she stopped, breathless, her hand on her side.

"Go back? To what? Drudgery?

Loneliness? Little graves?"

Her eyes mutinied.

"Come back!" Raucous, strident, the only sound in all that yellow world. It mocked her. It recalled her.

She had burned her bridges over the waterless rivers. She had thrown her promises to the cyclones. She had broken away, away—

"Come back! Come back!"

Out of the parched stubble of an edging field came a flock of Guinea hens, their neat little heads moving with their teetering gait, their speckled gray backs in order, the tidiest females in a land of slatternly women.

"Come back! Come back!"

Sleek, fat, complacent fools—pinheaded opinion found voice in their insistence. Rage seized her as she heard. Their empty cackle took the form of the very words that she had driven from her conscience.

"Ssh"—her throat was too dry to make a sound. She fluttered her skirt and ran at them. They sidled off the road.

Along the way there was no other sign of life. From horizon to horizon, desolation. She cowered under the blaring light and ran on.

"Come back! Come back!"

They were after her, ducking, teetering, little of feet and head and gross between. She scanned the ground looking for a stick or a stone. Was there no pebble in all that waste of sand? Despairingly she dug up bits of turf and flung them. They crumpled into dust, uselessly scattering. She pulled whips of grass that crackled as she struck right and left, driving the hens furiously. At the turn of the road they took to the fields, and she ran onward.

Another mile and the station, a rude shed at the siding, would be reached.

She had seen it once when an express had rushed in, stopped and flashed away. She would see the train again. And she would be aboard it. It made no difference which way it went. No difference. She would be on it—with people—living, folksy beings—humans! And the loneliness of the corn lands, the parched lands, would be over forever.

A mighty emotion swept her. There was not enough moisture in her world

for tears. A dry sob shook her.

From far came the low rumble of a train. In frantic haste she crunched across the sharp stubble of an intervening field and reached the cross road. Then, with head bent like a hound to the trail, and with all the speed of her long limbs, she ran for the station.

A few moments later Miss Alice Townsend, of New York, looked up from a letter she was reading into the face of a per-

son hesitating beside her.

It was on her lips to say, "You are in the wrong car," for a Pullman, on the Limited, is no place for a way passenger. But, after all, it was for the conductor to do that. She moved over and gave the newcomer a seat. And her glance went back to the closely written pages of her letter. The girl settled into the place, her calico gown overlapping the other's fault-less traveling coat, and gazed around with astonishment and curiosity, open-eyed.

"People—humans!"

For a time she paid no heed to the magnificent furnishings of the sleeping car: the mahogany and the glitter of electric chandeliers. Her starved eyes gazed upon her kind and drank of their smiles. Her unaccustomed ears caught the murmur of cultivated voices.

Over the tops of the velvet seats she saw the delicately coifed heads of women. A marvelous child stared at her from across the aisle. She felt a hot wave of self-consciousness—the vague, half-formed impression that she was among people, but not of them.

She put up her hand stealthily, and pulled off her sunbonnet by its string.

Her hair was rough, rusted like the husks of corn. She smoothed it furtively. Then, with an instinct of yearning friendliness, she pressed, ever so slightly, nearer to the lady beside her.

Alice Townsend, thirty, poised, a worldling of the best type, was reading her lover's letter as she sat in that west-bound train that was carrying her to him under the white banner of surrender.

He was a ranchman, with cattle on a thousand hills. She was of the idle rich. And she had returned a week before from Europe, where she had gone to forget him!

But now she bent closer over her letter.

"My love shall shelter you," she read; "my life shall be devoted to the one purpose of making you happy."

"Say, don't you believe all that man

says!"

Miss Townsend turned sharply and flashed a glance of surprised indignation at the woman who was reading over her shoulder.

"How dare you read my letter?" she exclaimed. "Don't you know better than that?"

"N-no, ma'am," was the abashed reply. The girl shrank back, then rallied.

"But he's lyin' to you, jest the same. I kin tell you that! Nuthin's took keer of out here, 'ceptin' corn. Women ain't."

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For the first time Miss Townsend regarded her seat mate with interest. saw a calico-garmented wisp of womanhood with young eyes set in an old face. Her glance softened. She folded her letter and put it away.

"How do you know that?" she asked

gently.

"Ain't you goin' on a ranch? That letter said so."

The girl touched the other woman's

ungloved hand.

"Say," she said—and a gleam of humor crinkled her mouth—"look at them together, yourn an' mine. Could that"-pointing to the slender white hand that lay beside her rough fingers-"lasso a bull or wash the work clothes fur a dozen cowpunchers? Well, that's what women have to do out here!"

Miss Townsend smiled. "But I am not going to a ranch to work," she said. "I'm going to live, and be happy—"

"That's what he says," flashed the girl skeptically. "But you wait till he gits you out there!"

Miss Townsend laughed outright.

"Why, you poor little thing," she said, "what has happened to you?"

"It's you that's the 'poor thing," she retorted. "You're jest gittin' into But I'm goin' away—I'm goin' away!"

The droop left her shoulders. straightened up. A long, deep breath reanimated her. The electric spark of freedom had kindled in her soul.

The worldwise Miss Townsend had

encountered a new experience.

"But where are you going?" she asked, her own pulses quickening at the elation of this bonnetless, baggageless adventurer.

"I dunno," she answered. "Some place where it's gay. About this much wuth of miles." From the pocket in the side of her slimsy dress she brought out a handful of crumpled paper money and loose coins.

"I was goin' to watch fur a place thet suited me, where there was lots of folks laughin' an' visitin' like round the deepo, an' then jump off. But seein' I've met up with you, mebbe you kin tell me the name of some lively town. 'Bout how fur do you reckon this'll take me?" she inquired, pouring the money into Miss Townsend's lap.

Miss Townsend counted the money and straightened it into a neat pile.

"I don't know just how far this will take you," she said. "But here comes the conductor; we'll ask him."

The look of indignant amazement on that official's face warned the young lady that she must present the case herself. And leaning forward, she explained that the passenger for somewhere was to be respectfully treated and left where she was. She herself paid for the Pullman and arranged for a ticket to Dempsupplementing thereafter the slender hoard; and when the conductor, ruffled and unpleased, moved on and the few curious travelers had resumed their reading, she turned brightly and said:

"Now tell me all about it. How old

are you?"

"Twenty, in May."

It seemed incredible. Yet there was something of youth in the curve of her cheek, for all its thinness and lack of bloom.

"Why, my dear," said Alice Townsend, "you are too young to be traveling alone. A young girl ought not to go to a strange city without a married woman to accompany her."

"I've been married six years," was the surprising answer. And at Miss Townsend's startled exclamation, she contin-

ued:

"That's why I told you what I did when I read your letter where he let on he was goin' to make it his job to take keer of you. You see, I know!"

The expression on Miss Townsend's face was not wholly one of amusement. The girl gazed out of the window. In a blur of burnt umber the corn fields swept But she did not see them.

Then her glance drifted again to the marvelous child now cuddled against her mother in the seat across the aisle.

"You see her?" she whispered, indicating the little girl with a motion of her hand. "I've had two."

"You?" Miss Townsend's cool hand closed over the red fingers. It was woman to woman now.

"You—lost them?" The question

was put very softly.

The woman of the corn lands nodded. "The first one lived a week. He was a peart little feller."

Silence fell between them. Then,

"Jest last spring," she went on, "the plow struck a snag an' the handle hit me in the side. They's two little graves back yonder. I planted a bush over 'em. But it died. Nuthin' lives there but corncorn an' Guinea hens."

"But you could not have been plowing at such a time!" The listener's tone

was full of horror.

"I ain't goin' to do it no more," was the reply, challenging, defiant. "I ain't goin' to do nuthin' I don't want to. I won't have to; he's back there, an' he ain't never goin' to ketch me!"

"Do you mean your husband?" She need not have asked the question of the excited, liberty-mad thing. And she did

not wait for the answer.

"Say, I'm as young as you, ain't I?" She asked this suddenly, turning her strained eyes upon Miss Townsend's delicate face.

"Why, you're ten years younger, child! At twenty one has just begun to live."

"Oh, that sounds good!" A wave of color swept her face. She was almost

pretty.

"Well, I'm goin' to live. An' I'm goin' to laugh an' play. I'm goin' to have white hands, like yourn, an' a white gownd! An' I won't keer fur nuthin'; I

won't keer-I won't keer!"

The train slowed perceptibly. Miss Townsend gathered up her wraps and the porter came in for her traveling bag and took her umbrella and magazines. As they pulled into a station she rose and bent over her seat mate, who kissed her loudly through her veil and whispered tenderly, with a good-bye:

"Honest, I wish you wasn't goin' into it. For I'm gittin' out—I'm goin' away!"

The next morning, in a beautifully appointed hotel dining room in a Western city, Alice Townsend sat with her husband at breakfast.

"You didn't really hesitate about coming to me, after all?" he asked,

bending toward her. A smile hung round his mouth; his glance caressed her.

"Yes, I did," she confessed merrily.
"I was warned against you."

"What!" His eyes gathered battle light. It was fun to tease him!

"A girl who read your letter over my shoulder in the train told me not to trust you!"

"W-what! A girl who read my let-

ter? My letter to you?"

The grapefruit became an apple of Sodom to him. He frowned into his coffee.

She laughed, and, sobering, told him. "Poor little thing!" he said compassionately, when the story was done. "She could have no other standard than her own sad experience. Let us pledge her a happier future. I hope she won't get into mischief!"

"She 'don't keer," quoted Miss

Townsend gaily.

A newsboy passed beneath the open window.

"Extra! Wreck of the California Special!"

They looked at each other with

startled eyes.

"That was your train!" His lips were white as he signalled the waiter to get a paper. He glanced at the headlines apprehensively.

"A bridge went down," he said. "Oh,

Alice! Thank God you are here!"

"Did—" She leaned forward. Her voice was very low. "Did anyone in the sleeper—"

"All—everybody," he answered.
"Not one was saved. It happened almost immediately after you left the train."

"Then—oh, Howard!"

"Yes. The woman of the corn fields, too. Here is her description. Don't cry, dear."

He took her hands with deep tender-

ness, sharing her thought.

"Poor little thing! She so wanted a chance—to live!"

Alice raised her head.

"But I remember her last words to me," she whispered, as one suddenly comforted. "They were:

"'Away-away.""

THE SONG OF THE VOTE

By Margaret Nelson Jackson

With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat at unwomanly work,
Earning the family bread.
Work, talk, write,
Till the cocks crow to be fed;
She must settle some point to suit the state
Before she retires to bed.

Oh, men with sisters dear,
Why lead ye such listless lives?
It's hardly fair ye should shirk the work
And leave it all to your wives.
Bridge and cricket and club
Are all very well in their way;
But what is the use of our having votes,
If you run away and play?

But why do I talk of play,
Of joys that are long since dead,
When women had time for a morning call,
And men did the work instead?
Now it's work, think, act—
My labor never flags;
And what are my wages? A churlish frown
From a husband who sleeps—or nags.

Work, work, work,
In the dull December light;
And work, work, work,
When the weather is warm and bright;
While out on the shady lawn,
In a deck chair blowing rings,
Sits my worser half with a cloudless brow,
And revels in restful things.

Oh, for one short hour, A respite however brief! No leisure now for tea and toast, But only time for grief. A little weeping would ease my heart, But tears are now remote,

May, 1912-7

And tears are somehow out of place From a woman who owns a vote.

With jawbone weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat at unwomanly work,
With an icebag on her head.
Work, watch, wait,
Till her youthful beauties fade;
And the dismal consolation is:
"You must lie on the bed you've made."



MY WAY

By Edna Valentine Trapnell

HIGHROAD and byroad, blatant road and shy road,
Paths of all the universe, old roads and new—
For me there's only my way, a green-shadowed byway
Whose end for me is Arcady, for it leads to home and you.

There were roads that led to Babylon a thousand years ago. And roads that men still travel on 'mid traffic's ebb and flow, Roads of court and courtier and roads of shame or fame. Men sought there and men sought here; some found both roads the same—Roads of musk and May so sweet, roads of dusk and dew—Never beckoned way so sweet as that which leads to you.

"Grim road or dim road, ever be to him, Road,
The highway to happiness"—'tis I that know your prayer.
But happiness' only highway—none other could be my way—
Is that shall wend to "Journey's End" and find you waiting there.



ATTORNEY—How do you know what could be seen through the keyhole? WITNESS—I was in a position to learn.



AUTHOR—I have poured my soul out into this book. Publisher—Well, you couldn't boil it down, could you?

HER GRADE CROSSING

By Amy Crosby

want the earth," quoted Linda, as she lifted the sagging coal scuttle up the last cellar step, and put down her candle. "I wonder what men want?" she muttered, and shifting the weight, she trudged on into the kitchen.

Here before a sand-scoured table, halfway between the sink and range, her husband's chair blocked the way. His pudgy white hand supported his chin as he ran the black stump of a pencil down

a column of figures.

"Forty an' ten's fifty; five is fifty-five; ten more's sixty-five—seventy-five—Over eighty dollars a month that upper hall's payin' me—"

"Move your chair back, Dave, an' lemme fix the fire," interrupted Linda.

"What's the rush? Keeps till mornin', don't it?" snapped Brill, without mov-

ing.

"Taxes out an' all, that's twenty per cent on the money," he figured. "I salt down every darned cent o' that, too. Pretty good, eh, Linda?"

"I wish we didn't have to take no boarder," ventured Linda. "School

teachers upset me."

Brill frowned. "I s'pose you'd let that great big front room go to waste. That woman, besides payin' fair board, is willin' to do all my bookkeepin'."

Linda smiled, a mirthless, dutiful smile, drew a chair beside the table and

sat down.

"I've never kicked at things, Dave," she said earnestly, "but I don't want to take that boarder. She's so flaunty—spoutin' her learnin' round here like a book agent. An' I—I'm tired lately, Dave," she added.

"Tired! Why, women these days

don't know what work is. At your age my mother had five children. She done all her own work, an' kept boarders," gloried Dave. "She was smarter 'n steel."

"But mebbe your father didn't put on a fresh shirt every mornin'. Mebbe hebought her somethin' pretty once in a while—or—took her out for a little pleasure," continued Linda cautiously.

"Pleasure wasn't the fashion; savin' was," snapped Dave. "When folks gets old they can set down, take off their shoes an' put on slippers. But hustlin' is our job now, my woman. An' that teacher's comin'."

Linda made no reply. She mixed the bread, dampened the clothes, turned off the fires, locked the house and followed

her husband upstairs.

It was the click of the front gate next morning a little after ten that made Linda drop her iron suddenly and hurry through the sitting room to the front windows. A tall, broad-shouldered man, with an easy swing to his walk, bounded up the front steps and rang the bell.

"This Mrs. Brill?" he asked hurriedly, pulling off his cap. "The postmaster told me you wanted a boarder. Will you

take me?"

Linda drew back a step and rubbed three nervous fingers across her lips. "Why, no—er, no," she stammered, "I don't know as I will."

"I won't be a bit of trouble," he prom-

ised zealously. "I'll help you."

"Why, er—you see," faltered Linda, as her brown eyes shifted, "my husband wants to—to take that school teacher."

But the stranger persevered. "The postmaster's wife 'll take her; he said so. An' you see I'd ought to live up here

next the engine yards an' my job—I run that sleeper to Rochester. It'll be handy to kite down here across this lot," he said, extending his thumb. "I wish you'd chance me, Mrs. Brill."

"What's your name?" asked Linda,

warming.

"Todd—Fritz Todd; an' say," he added, feeling the thaw, "I'll tend your fires, shovel your paths, do all the chores an' pay my board. Try me, won't you?"

Silhouetted against the cold, gray sky, Todd's stalwart form seemed overpowering, but his ruddy cheeks, steady blue eyes and genial smile reassured Linda.

"I can yank that trunk out o' the engine house in nine minutes," he urged, "if you'll just take me—say for a month."

Linda felt a sudden gush of defiant

courage.

"Well," she said, flushing, "you kin fetch it up. But wait. Can you pay say—eight dollars?" she asked.

The stranger laughed. "Sure I can," he promised quickly and bounded down

the steps.

And so it happened that when David Brill sauntered leisurely home to dinner a little after one he found a strange man at his table. David had a way of batting his small eyes and throwing out his chin when embarrassed. He coughed, looked annoyed, then coughed again.

"David," said his wife, with puzzling composure, "Mr. Todd's boardin' here, so you'd better let the postmaster know that the room's taken. Will you have oysters or warmed-over chicken stew?"

David knew Todd in a roundabout way, and put out a cold, limp hand.

"Ain't you a little soon?" he asked, of no one in particular, trying to smile. "It's the earmarks o' my job," laughed Todd. "Most women bickers; but our deal took seven minutes. So I guess it'll go all right fer both of us. I've had a blamed good dinner, but I've got to pull out of Backriver now in twenty minutes," he added. "I get in about seven two in the mornin', Mrs. Brill—up here for breakfast say half past; but I'll whistle special to you at the bridge. So long," he called, hurrying out.

It was some time after this before David spoke. Linda's courage fell to an anxious offer of a hotter muffin, a little jam or the favorite pickle, but her husband only frowned and shook his head or threw out an elbow. Beyond the scrape of his knife or the rattle of his spoon there was no sound except the regular tick of the tall clock.

The meal ended, and David, having scraped the last creamy grain of rice from the edge of his plate, raised his fish white face to Linda and smiled a sneering, nose squinting smile, showing two

gold teeth.

"So—you git in here an outsider, eh?" he said. "Well, I tried to bring you a nice little girl, but you go and bring in a rope to hang yourself. It'll be your gossipy funeral, though, so finish it."

Linda gathered the blue plates and

made no reply.

"I say hang yourself; it's your own funeral."

"A payin' boarder ain't a funeral," answered Linda, after a thoughtful wait.

"'Tain't, eh? What do you know about this smilin' blue-eyed ladykiller? I say, what do you know about him?"

"I know he pays me eight dollars; I know he don't talk to show off, and I know he'll be less trouble than a

woman," she answered tersely.

"Trouble! Ten years from now women'll be dealin' out food capsules to save the trouble o' cookin'. They're gittin' so they want the earth, women do. You kin take it from me, though," declared Dave, stepping briskly toward the sink, "I'm the man that's runnin' this ranch. Understand that!"

Linda faced him squarely, her cheeks

slightly flushed.

"An' from now on," she answered quietly, "I'm goin' to be the woman that runs my part of it. I'll earn every cent o' that board money, an' I calc'late to keep it, Dave Brill."

Brill stood a moment frowning. A lock of his black, stubborn hair fell across one eye, giving him a vicious expression. "So you make it no trumps, do you?" he muttered, leaving the room.

A few moments later he returned. "These evenin' clothes," he began,

holding up 3 dents now got to be pressed. holding up another now every night, and rool tourned you wouldn't look after pressin' these regular ...

Testing her frons mechanically, Linda smoothed out the trousers, laid a damp cloth over them and went to work, while

David paced the floor.

"That teacher," he resumed in a changed tone, "would 'a' been an all right boarder fer you when I go away."

"Goin' away?" asked Linda indiffer-

ently.

"Off an' on, yes—to pool tournaments."

Linda chose a still hotter, heavier iron and pressed on silently.

"I say yes," snapped Brill—"off an' on, yes"—a little louder this time. "I heard you."

"The woman, I say, was a safer boarder. I know all about her," repeated Brill.

"Men's as safe as women for me," answered Linda, leaning hard upon her iron. "I ain't handsome."

There was a moment's pause. "You don't know anything about this man

Todd," persevered Brill.

"No, only that he runs his train nights an' sleeps daytimes. He eats two meals here, takes his supper in a pail and pays thirty-two dollars a month for that room you wanted rented," recited Linda. "It ain't very complex."

"It ain't now, no," growled Brill; "but you want to keep next to this fact:

the ranch is mine."

Linda folded the suit, packed it into the grip, brushed Dave's fur-lined coat, fastened a loose button and returned to her kitchen work. She was polishing the oven door, nearly two hours later, when Dave, thrusting his fur-capped head into the kitchen door, said:

"That game is apt to last all night,

but Bruno'll be here."

Brill's being away was not an event, and on such occasions the great St. Bernard never left Linda. There was a touch of human feeling in his watchful eye, his casual wag and his discriminating attentions. Linda, depending upon it, talked aloud to him as to a sympathetic companion.

"You're always here, ain't you, Bruno? You an' me," she added slowly. "It's a wonder he remembers it."

The next morning Todd's whistle came ahead of time. Drawing the coffee pot to the front of the stove, Linda broke a couple of eggs into the frying pan beside the ham, and fluttered about the kitchen with light-hearted interest in her work, half suppressing a new but

vague pleasure.

Todd's complimentary attack upon "It's eatin' breakfast delighted her. round everywhere that puts home cookin' above par," he declared fervently as he drained his last cup of cof-"Great things, though, these mornin' rides when the day's breakin'. Puts a new light on things," he explained, placing his chair back against the wall. "Troubles fade," he added thoughtfully. "Here, gimme that scuttle, Mrs. Brill. Do you sift these ashes? An' where's your coal?"

Linda objected. "You're payin' high fer that room, Mr. Todd, an' I'm used

to totin' 'em."

"Why, I've had coal and cinders cornered now for six years," smiled Todd. "You don't want me to feel homesick, do you?"

"Seems to me, after an all-night's run, sleep's what you need," she answered.

"I need little home jobs like these, too, Mrs. Brill," declared Todd. There was something in his voice that touched her, and without knowing why, she slipped up the back stairs, turned down his bed, laid out his pajamas, darkened the blinds and hurried back again into the kitchen, to find Bruno facing the stranger.

"Hello, doggy!" he called, moving cautiously. "Don't you like boarders?"

Bruno looked, sniffed, started to wag, sniffed again, then gave a quick low bark and walked away.

"That mean yes or no?" asked Todd, advancing a step nearer Mrs. Brill.

As though resenting his move, Bruno crossed the kitchen, rubbed his great, shaggy, tan sides against Linda's skirts and looked steadily at Todd.

"Knows his job, don't he? No better breed. Well, so long, Mrs. Brill. About six hours' sleep is my stint. Could I have dinner, say, about one or half past?" he inquired. "An', do you mind callin' me?"

This uneventful day repeated itself. It was some weeks later, when the train schedule changed, that the domestic tension began to tighten.

Late one afternoon Todd entered the house a few moments before David left, and overheard his finishing touch.

"It's no place for a woman, I tell you, a rink ain't. No way to git home, either. Pool room's crowded now till after the trolleys quit. An' you're a blamed poor walker."

"I could take a carriage home for a dollar, Dave," coaxed Linda, "and I'd give twice that to see the skaters."

"Can't bother with it tonight; I'm too confounded busy," declared Brill pompously, rising. "Hello, Todd," he said, batting his eyes and poking out his chin; "quit your old train tonight and see the show. Stunt skaters here from Canada. Great pair! English duke out o' funds has entered the pool contest, too," he lied chestily. "Some class to my hall!"

Todd placed his chair at the table leisurely and helped himself to chicken. "Mebbe I will," he answered. "Whole time schedule changed today; got my

orders on the way up."

"Sleeper switched?" inquired Brill

quickly.

"Yes," answered Todd casually. "I'll be here nights now instead o' daytimes; so mebbe I'll pipe off some o' your contests. That's pretty good potpie, Mrs. Brill—lighter'n a feather. Gimme a little more, will you?"

At this point a trolley bell clanged, and as the heavy car made its screeching turn at the foot of the hill, Brill's usual

dash brought him to the door.

"Put some sandwiches on that small stand head o' my bed case I need 'em,"

he called back.

There was silence for a moment, then Todd lighted his pipe, and crossing to the stairway, took a blue apron off the hook, tied it round his waist and gathered up the spoons.

"My name's Fritz," he said present-

ly, smiling. "And I like it. What's yours?"

"It's Linda," she answered, coloring.
"Now, Linda, we'll go to the show.
It's a long, cold ride in, but we'll get a
hot supper at a restaurant, the yellow
lunch wagon or some other little joint."
Mrs. Brill started. "Dave'll—"

"Be a little surprised," finished Todd, "but it won't hurt him any. We'll hustle this work out the way, put on the best we've got and take the rest of the day

off, both of us."

Still flushing, Linda put the spoons into the knife box, the mince pie into the linen closet, and turned on the cold water spigot.

"But you see," she stammered, after some thought, "I ain't got the right

things to wear. Dave says so."

Todd pulled hard at his pipe a second. "Lay 'em all out an' we'll look 'em over," he encouraged. "Things look a good deal better in the evenin'."

There was rapid but silent work for a

while.

"I had a new tan dress fer Minnie's weddin', but it's a little fancy," explained Linda, scouring the last knife. "Fastens in the back, too," she added thoughtfully.

"I kin couple it fer you," promised

Todd quickly.

"I ain't got a coat, either—no warm

one," confided Linda.

"You kin wear mine, that narrow gauge one, with the plush linin'."

"Then, too, my hat's straw," she

added.

Taking his pipe from his mouth, Todd studied its brown bowl thoughtfully. Then he wagged his head slowly and

said:

"Hats ain't classy fer night wear nowadays. Women drapes slazy rags over their heads. Just wait a jiffy," he called, darting up the stairs to his own room. "This here," he explained, as he laid a blue silk scarf across Linda's dark hair, "was bought in California once for a girl. I used to think it was handsome."

Linda thought it was, and smiled into

the mirror.

"Looks all right there," commented Todd, "an' you can have it, Linda. She

didn't need it, nor me, neither," he

added, turning his back.

A few hours later an eager crowd left the Riverville restaurant, and pushed its way into a wriggling line before the Pleasure Palace ticket window. Into this mass crept Linda, looking quite lost in her gray coat, which was too big and too long, but she held it high at the feet, and the sleeves covered her ungloved hands. Under the blue scarf her thin pale face looked all eyes, wide glistening ones.

They went straight on and neither of them spoke. Resting his big hand on Linda's elbow, Todd guided her gently through the door and across the rink to a secluded corner apart from the music. Here she sat motionless and watched the gaily dressed skaters roll swiftly by.

Two acrobats appeared, and the crowd dispersed. In flaming red suits, fur trimmed, they toe-skated, heel-skated, and raced, then waltzed, schottisched and polkaed. With an extra pair of skates upon her elbows, and both feet in her husband's hands, Madame Froid, after a few turns as an animated wheel barrow, turned a double handover, struck squarely upon her left foot, glided into her husband's arms and rolled away in time to a waltz.

Linda gasped, and Fritz leaned to-

ward her.

"Skatin' is new to me, too," he said, removing her coat. "It's the first night I've had off in three years," he added. "You see, I'm spliced to my engine."

But Linda could only sigh and watch. The music gave a crash, ceased and the room was still for a moment. In a small upper balcony, Brill, the manager, appeared. He leaned well over the crowd until every eye seemed fixed upon the sparkling stud illuminating his shirt front.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he announced in loud ringmaster tones, "the final game of the famous pool contest is now beginning. Admission ten cents!"

Men hastily withdrew.

"We better hurry down now, and see Dave licked," laughed Fritz, rising.

But Linda hesitated.

"Come," urged Todd. "Skatin's all

over now. They're rushin' for good seats."

Still Linda faltered.

"Come along, Linda," pressed Todd.
"Fritz," she said nervously, "don't let's see Dave play. You don't know how white he gets if he's mad."

"But, Linda-"

"No—no! I don't want to see that," she declared ardently. "I want a pleasure to think of. So take me back now, will you, Fritz?"

Todd hesitated, glancing from the scattering crowd back to Linda again. "Yes," he said thoughtfully. "Yes, sure

I will, Linda."

The Backriver cars were cold and draughty. Fritz mentioned it, and taking the window seat himself, he turned up Linda's collar, spread a thick newspaper under her feet, placed his arm upon the back of the seat and talked quietly.

"I don't like sneakin' it on Brill," he declared sincerely. "He's got a right to

know we saw the skaters."

"No, Fritz," argued Linda. "It'd only rile him, and for weeks he'd take it out on me."

Fritz shook his head. "I think, Linda, we better tell him. It's all right, anyway, our goin', and it's best to tell him."

"Dave never tells me anything," defended Linda. "I never have only just what he wants to give me. I got a reason, Fritz, for not tellin' him."

"Why, Linda?"

"Oh, because. It's a real bright spot now, but it gets all gray like the rest if Dave knows it. Don't tell him, Fritz, please. Lemme keep this little pleasure

all my own."

"Sure, sure I will. But, Linda," he began again, as they reached the gate, "no reason for Dave's gettin' mad. He wouldn't take you." For a moment he laid his hand upon Linda's shoulder. "Slip off this coat an' I'll oncouple the dress," he explained quickly. "I'm goin' fer a long walk."

The sky was deep and blue and there

were many stars.

"I like it here at night," stammered Fritz, struggling with a stubborn hook. "It's most all sky, but it's friendly. Day-

time's all hustle and bustle—everybody strugglin' to be first; but the night—Somehow, Linda, somehow, the stars seem to me kinder, more like friends, than people. I mean if you're down on your luck, or—or—git in wrong."

Linda's whole body listened.

"I like livin' on a hill, lookin' out at things," he continued slowly. "I dunno who did plan the day, Linda, but God Almighty planned the night. Now go in to bed; it's late," he added abruptly. "I can't sleep, so I'll walk a few miles in the open air. Take Bruno up with you. He'll keep you safe till Dave comes."

It was late the next afternoon, nearly five, when Brill wakened. He called sharply, waited a moment, pounded the floor with his shoe and called again.

"I hurt my arm last night," he declared brusquely as Linda appeared. "An' my head aches. Bring me up somethin' to eat—somethin' fresh," he added quickly—"no leavin's."

But today even his wife's prompt and customary obedience seemed to annoy

David.

"I can't see," he grumbled, half an hour later, poking at a juicy chop, "why you don't cook my meat. Lately everything's half raw." He added, as Linda rose to go:

"See here, Linda, I don't like that boarder o' yours; an' he's got to vamoose

this ranch!"

Linda colored. "I don't see what you've got against him," she answered

promptly.

"You don't, eh! I got my opinion; that's what I got. You kin tell him today that his room's wanted."

It was a long moment before Linda

spoke.

"Dave," she began slowly, "I ain't much on talkin', an' you know it, but Fritz Todd keeps that room an' the money goes to me, or I look for a new job."

Brill sprang up in bed. "What the

dev---"

"You can holler an' yell an' pound, but you can't scare me out o' that, Dave Brill," she announced calmly, picking up the tray. "As to supper, if you want any, me and Todd'll eat ours downstairs on the kitchen table at seven o'clock;" and closing the door gently, she passed on down the stairs, her knees

trembling.

But supper had been all cleared away, and the evening was nearly over, when Dave, carefully dressed and smiling, descended the stairs. Shuffling his feet on the hard floor, as boys do who wish to assert themselves, he ambled into the stiff little sitting room, where Fritz and Linda sat before a crackling wood fire, a checkerboard between them.

Evening papers, a discarded pipe and a partly darned sock lay on the table under a lamp. Dave looked at the sock, then at Todd, with an irritated eye, and flinging himself into a chair, snatched

up a paper.

"Minnie's coming here to pay me a visit," he announced after a few moments. "She'll bring both children, so, Todd, you'll have to beat it for the Backriver House."

Todd nodded consent, shuffled the checkers briskly and started to speak,

but Linda checked him.

"It ain't convenient fer me to take care o' Minnie's family just now," she said decidedly. "The room's taken."

"My sister'll be visitin' me," retorted

Dave

"You ain't much of a cook, Dave, and Minnie likes good eatin'. Her children

are heavy feeders, too."

"Don't let my bein' here upset things," interrupted Todd quickly. "I'm expectin' orders to that new special. That'll mean roostin' in Chicago, so my stay here is short, anyway."

"How short?" inquired Brill.

"Liable to go most any day," answered Todd calmly. "I'm only waitin' fer orders."

But Linda was ill at ease. After a while she threw herself face downward upon her bed, where she lay fully dressed, wide-eyed and thoughtful.

Friction followed; but days and weeks dropped away, and snow clouds thickened and fell, before Linda's unsettled little bark capsized. Although Todd's vague reference to a change of trains had served at first to appease Dave, his failure to be exact upset him. After many

but restless evenings at home, Dave's morbid suspicions still smoldered, like an ash-choked fire, awaiting a slight,

flimsy chip as an excuse to flame.

"I'm goin' to Rochester tonight on business," he announced one morning, "so that man Todd'll be all you have to cater to. You won't have to hide his socks to darn 'em, nor sew on his buttons after dark. All the time there is'll be his."

There was no answer to this thrust, and Brill stepped nearer, for he hated independence in the form of dignity.

"I say the time'll all be his," he

sneered.

Linda's nervous fingers clutched her apron, but keeping her voice low and

steady, she replied:

"Dave, whatever happens, the biggest share of the upset is yours. You know well enough that you've nothin' to kick at."

"Part of my business in Buffalo," he added, as a parting shot, "is connected with this railroad. I'm goin' to look up a record or two. The outcome may in-

terest you," he concluded.

After Dave had left, Linda entered absent-mindedly upon her work. It had begun to snow a little, and roaming aimlessly about the house, she seated herself for long intervals at a time, first at one window, then at another. The storm increased. The wind blew, and Bruno scratched at the door; but Linda seemed to have forgotten him. She sat there, staring off into space, until his plaintive bark brought her to herself. Then, as he crawled dejectedly into the room, she caught him firmly by the ears, and dropping upon the floor beside him, gazed into his upturned face.

"Bruno," she said gravely—"Bruno, I'm goin' to do it. He don't care a bit fer me, Dave don't. I'm just a ma-

chine."

Bruno sighed, a deep dog sigh.

"I don't know as Fritz cares," she went on; "he never said so; but, Bruno, I could work my fingers off for Fritz, 'cause he's so—so different."

Bruno licked his chops and drew in his chin, arching his neck thoughtfully. "I've seen his order to leave," continued Linda. "It's on his table. But, Bruno, I'm goin' to leave, too. I'm goin'

away with Fritz!"

The wind, like one distraught, whistled and moaned. It sifted fine snow through the window cracks and drifted a thin white streak beyond the doorsill. As though sensing a wrong, Bruno drew a step nearer, and placing his left paw into Linda's lap, rested his cold, black

nose against her ear.

"It's all ready," confided Linda, rising after a moment. "I'm goin' dressed like a man," she explained, as Bruno tagged along into the storeroom. "I'm goin' to be a friend of Fritz," she reasoned, slipping off her dress and holding up a pair of half-worn trousers. "You see, Bruno," she continued, drawing them on and thrusting her slight arms into a shabby gray sweater, "my hair's so skimpy it won't show under this cap. I can get work," she added gaily. ain't afraid o' work; that's the best part of it! There's cars to clean on this special, an' the fire to tend. The work don't scare me. It's the—" She stopped and fell upon her knees again beside Bruno. "You-you better come, too," she whispered, patting his head. "You've never left me; and you're all I got," she concluded, as his warm tongue caressed her

The day seemed long and overwhelming. Night and the storm advanced before Fritz Todd, ploughing his belated way through the blinding snow, stamped his feet across the porch and entered the

kitchen, singing.

"Who said winter was over?" he called cheerily, then checked himself, pulled off his cap, ran his fingers through his hair and stared a moment at Linda. "What in Sam Hill are you togged up like that for, Linda?" he asked. "Where's Dave?"

"Dave's gone. He went to Rochester on business," she continued, coloring. "Come, Fritz," she added quickly. "Let's eat supper while it's hot. There's somethin' I've decided to do," she explained,

a little troubled.

Fritz drew off his wet coat, hung it on a peg and stood still, puzzled.

"What you goin' to do?" he asked,

smiling. "Enlist in the army—or help

me shovel snow?"

Linda had busied herself about the stove for a moment. "I'm goin' to help you, Fritz," she answered seriously, stepping beside him—"you instead o' Dave. I'm goin' to leave Dave, and I'm goin' to work in Chicago, too. I don't care if it is man's work. I—I want to be with you," she concluded.

Fritz drew his fingers across his chin, once, twice, three times, and fixing his big eyes upon Linda a moment, he crossed the room nervously, poked the fire with some vigor and put on coal,

then turned and faced her.

"Linda," he said gravely, "Linda, girl, go put on your own clothes. I—got somethin' to say—to Brill's wife," he added thoughtfully. "Put on that little blue spotted dress you wore the day we started in, and never mind supper. I've et all I want tonight."

The kitchen seemed so wretchedly still to Linda when she returned a few moments later, that she stopped in the doorway until Fritz lifted his head. Rising slowly, he drew another chair beside the table opposite his own.

"Sit here, out o' the draught," said he. "I—I never expected it to turn out this way, Linda," he began hesitatingly. I'm—you see, I'm livin' somethin' down, little girl; but I guess the secret's got to be yours, too, now." Then he waited a long, thoughtful moment, resting his

chin in one hand.

"I ain't always drove an engine, Linda—I wish I had! Ten years ago I was on the road sellin' high grade machinery, strugglin' to git rich. The commissions didn't count up quick enough, so I—well, I juggled the firm's money. But I was clumsy and they caught me. The court gimme five years. Fer five years I done time. Five years in prison, Linda, is like the pits o' smallpox. You can't get away from 'em! After that. wherever I went fer a job, they showed. I done gang work, but what's that? One day somethin' pushed me toward Sykes. We was boys together, and he ain't had the easiest time in the world himself; but he's superintendent of motive power on the road now, an' square as a die!

He gimme a note to take to the yards, and they put me to cleanin' locomotives. Then I got a hist to stokin'. Things run along that way a couple o' years.

"Todd,' says Sykes one mornin', 'never mind the yesterdays—it's what you're worth today that counts. You kin run that night freight to Rochester

fer a spell.'

"I run her a year an' a half. Then he

turned up again.

"'Six hundred lives is a good many, ain't it, Fritz?' says he. 'That seven two Rochester sleeper averages just about that. It'll be your new job, the first o' the month.'

"And, Linda," said Fritz, leaning forward, "that first night, when I stuck my head out o' the cab window, looked up at the stars and felt that every passenger on the hull train was trustin' me—no king on earth could 'a' been happier. I

took my oath then."

Fritz stared at the table. "You've meant more to me, Linda, than any woman ever meant," he added. "I want you to know that." Then he hesitated again. "But you see—that—that hole in my life! It's got to be fenced, Linda, girl. The edge is weak yet, and stealin' a man's wife is—well, it's makin' the gap bigger, cause it ain't givin' everyone a square deal."

Linda had not taken her eyes off Todd; she rose, slowly crossed to his chair, and laying her warm arm tenderly across his

shoulders, said:

"Fritz, I just want you to know that I love you, and—I ain't afraid of that gap."

She was too absorbed to see an outside shutter turn or to hear a creaking step in the snow, and continued to plead. "You need somebody, Fritz, more'n Dave does. I've done my duty by Dave—but I want to be near you. Lemme go—"

Suddenly the door burst open, and Dave's snow-specked figure flaunted into

the room.

"So," he hissed, "I got home too soon, didn't I? That's the kind of a woman

you are, is it? I'll teach you-"

White with rage, he rushed forward, seized Linda's arm and jerked her backward, striking her hip brutally against a sharp corner of the table.

Linda screamed, and Fritz sprang at him.

"You razor-backed hog!" he cried between his teeth, gripping Dave's throat. "Hurt one hair of her head, and I'll choke your damned wind off!" and pinning him firmly to the wall, Fritz held him a moment.

"I-I-" gasped Brill, batting his eyes-"ain't I got a right to teach her

that—that—she's mine?"

"She ain't forgot it," vowed Todd, "never fer a minute. She's a good

woman."

"Listen, Dave," broke in Linda, stepping nearer, her blanched face turned toward his. "It's God's truth; so don't—don't stop me. I wanted to leave you—to run away with Todd; but he—he wouldn't let me. I wanted to work—work near him on the special—'cause I hate the—the—empty way we live. But I guess—I wasn't meant fer no special," she choked—"only—only fer freight," she sobbed; and sinking into a

crumpled heap beside the table, she buried her face in her arms.

Fritz had stepped to one side as Linda spoke, but he turned abruptly now, and with one pitying glance at her he faced Dave.

"Yes, she was, too," he declared slowly, "intended for a special. The question is—whose?"

Crossing to the door, he took his coat and hat from the nail and turned again.

"It's an open game now, Brill," he said seriously; "but it's your lead!"

Then he opened the door quickly and went out.

Dave stood still until Todd's last step had creaked across the porch. He waited until the gate clicked. Then, taking a candle off the shelf, he looked from a new angle at Linda, picked up the empty scuttle and opened the cellar door.

"So it's my lead," he muttered gravely, descending the stairs. "And Linda'll play to a heart," he added

under his breath.



MASKS

By Martha Haskell Clark

ALONG the dusty highway, stretching brown,
One walked alone, with steady, changeless tread,
With stern-lipped mouth and grave, unsmiling eyes,
And gaze far fixed upon the course ahead.
How might I know, who watched him pass along,
That all his heart was breaking forth in song?

And soon one passed light-footed on the way,
With smiling glance and merry flash of teeth.
So swift he strode, he scarcely seemed to spurn
The gathered roadway dust, thick flung beneath.
I marked him go, nor knew that all the while
A world of heartbreak lay beneath his smile.

TRYING AGAIN

By Walt Mason

No boarding house, tavern or inn was in sight; so into a cavern went Bruce, in sore plight. By enemies hunted, a price on his head, and all his schemes shunted, he wished he was dead. "In vain my endeavor, repulsed my demands; I'll try again never—I throw up my hands!" And so he lay sighing and cussing his fate, and wished he was lying stone dead in a crate. A spider was spinning its web by the wall; now losing, now winning, now taking a fall; though often it tumbled, it breathed not a sob, nor crawfished nor grumbled, but stuck to its job. Then Bruce opened wider his eyes and exclaimed: "That dodgasted spider has made me ashamed! I'm but a four-flusher to sit here and whine! This morning must usher in triumphs of mine!"

He canned all his wailing and cut out the frown, and went forth a-sailing, and

won a large crown!

And legions of fellows with tears in their eyes, who wear out their bellows with groaning and sighs, who think they are goners, ordained to the dump, would harvest some honors if they would just hump! The spiders are teaching, the same as of old; the spiders are preaching a gospel of gold: "Though baffled and broken, O children of men, let grief be unspoken—go at it again!"



MASTERS

By Willis Leonard Clanahan

HEAVEN and hell within ourselves do lie;
We are the masters of all good, all ill;
Sorrow cannot unman us, save we will,
And joy will reign, unless we will it die;
We make our own life level, low or high;
We plant our gardens, our own fields we till,
And carve our fortune with a master's skill,
Or mar the shaft with an untutored eye.
Of good or evil, nothing comes by chance;
We rule our destinies, decree our fate,
And of ourselves fall fainting, or advance,
And roam in devious paths, or walk in straight.
There is no victim of foul circumstance;
By strength we rise, or fall of our own weight.

THE ROUNDED YEAR

By Atkinson Kimball

OU don't mean to say you live here all winter!"

The young girl hardly seemed convinced when we gravely asseverated

that we did.

"Well," she went on, with the inconsequence of her sex, "I certainly admire you. You have the courage of your convictions. You lead an ideal life. But I

could never stand it."

The young girl had the vealy charm young girls have. As we looked at her with the sapience of our seventy years, counting our ages collectively, we half expected her to indulge in involuntary physical friskings, like a stiff-legged, tail-twitching calf, consonant with the aimless runs and jumpy gambolings of her immature mind.

And yet we felt flattered. Her heady praise affected us like wine. We began to see ourselves in the puissant proportions of heroes, worthy of homage, pensions, tablets on our dwelling, medals on our breasts. A moment's reflection, however, and we plumped to earth with a jar that was wholesome for our spiritual livers. We remembered that not one of our farmer neighbors spends the winter at the Waldorf or Palm Beach. We realized that in living frugally next the land, summer and winter, we were acting precisely like eight-tenths of our compatriots, the real backbone of the country-your only true creators. whether the product be white beans or the raw material for self-made city men.

Before moving permanently to the country, I confess that we had our apprehensions, as became two city seed-lings of spindling growth. Every winter

we had been accustomed to stew with steam or freeze with furnaces; we were used to sweltering in crowded cars, thence emerging into the germ-laden outer air that pierced us to the marrow. We thought that was the only way for Christian folk to live; we were as ignorant of anything better as pallid grubs that linger out a languid half-existence under flat stones in a perpetual, noisome hibernation.

After three rounded years in the country, we find that we have fallen as naturally into an autumn and winter ritual as the spring and summer ritual we formulated when, city palefaces, we fancied we could pluck the sweets of the year in a few short months. The autumn and winter ritual is simply the spring and summer ritual turned upside down; and we call it shortening sail. Nature herself has given us an example with a like inversion.

Spring comes, shy, virginal, heralded by a million delicate odors blown from the tenderest of trumpets. Why do we always feel a pleasant melancholy when the buds burst, and the feline sea purrs softly, and blackbirds, following the plough, are as clamorous as women at a bargain sale in the steaming, fresh turned furrows? Does spring suggest too poignantly the discrepancy between promise and fulfillment—or is it too divine for mortal apprehension—or does it bring back dim images from previous incarnations, shadowy pictures of ladies we loved in Babylon, and married and got divorced from?

Then, lo, it is summer—almighty summer, with its roses and raptures and

caterpillars and city visitors. It seems as if it would last forever; but on some unfine morning we wake to realize that it is almost over, and we feel like a man suddenly plunged into the chilling consciousness that he is almost forty, and that life is almost done.

We cannot help an instinctive shrinking at the approach of fall, and we murmur, "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," as a boy whistles to keep his courage up, although in autumn we have air as clear as the air of Colorado, and our corner of New England is far from fruitful unless one limes the old, sour soil. I wonder whether there's any spiritual lime that a person could apply to some of the inhabitants?

There is nothing shy or virginal about the autumn. Autumn has been through the mill: he knows more than a thing or two: he comes decked in flowers that flaunt an almost acrid scent. Bacchic. fertile as old Nile, he reels in rubicund repletion, in much the figure of the harvest moon that leaves a hundred little duplicates of itself in every cornfield among the rustling shocks that are part and pattern of the vast rug of yellow and purple, red and russet, which is spread over the whole countryside, richer than any Oriental weave.

Then, on another morning, we wake to find this rug rolled up and gone. Magically, while we slept, our house was moved leagues and leagues nearer the Arctic Circle, nature kindly taking the trouble and expense of moving off our hands. The woods are under bare poles. The time has come to shorten sail.

Following the example of the trees, our flagstaff sheds its summer banner, replacing it with an infinitesimal storm signal that defies the wildest wind that blows: the last screen going up to the attic meets the first double window coming down; we remove the autumn branches from the fireplace; we unsheathe Falstaff from enshrouding newspapers as from a second adventure in a buck basket—a stove as capacious and good-natured as his namesake, but more reliable. His genial heat forces us to put our dining table between the windows, where as we eat we sit looking at the

landscape as if in the dining car of a transcontinental train that has stopped forever at a mysterious station in some Arcadian country. All we lack is a whistle, a bell and a negro waiter to make the

illusion complete.

During the summer, our house, with every window open, had been practically all roof, a mushroom in effect, under which we sheltered ourselves from rain or too ardent sunshine. Now the house, with storm doors and storm windows battened down like hatches, becomes again a real domicile with walls, a warm, inviting burrow—a ship ready to ride out the most tempestuous gale. Stripped of its gallant sails of vines and herbaceous shrubbery, it squats and dwindles, bracing itself with the memories of a hundred New England winters.

Hitherto our gaze had been directed toward the firmament, the fields, the sea. Now we turn to the sweet security of indoors; we become domesticated. We seek adventures by the fireside, where the flame, as domesticated as ourselves, miraculous as when first filched from heaven, coruscates as brilliantly as-Aldebaran, turning sunlight into firelight-driftwood from the beach, the fragments from a lost armada, bearing in token of their rich sea change a myriad iridescent jewels; logs from decrepit fruit trees, with their sibilant, cool flames; snapping hemlock; cedar as aromatic as a verse from the Song of Songs; and Anglo-Saxon oak, solid to the heart, the backbone, or rather the back log, of the whole fireplace, sober, dependable, slightly contemptuous perhaps of the evanescent scintillations of its more spectacular companions. Meanwhile, in the dining room, Falstaff glows in silent contentment, his fair round belly lined with good sea coal.

The time of year has come to take account of stock during long, lamplighted evenings; to view life through the medium of literature rather than nature: to gaze with that inward eye which is the bliss of the populous solitude called matrimony. We feel as snug in our little dwelling as children playing house in a dark, delightful cave; we are as prepared as Esquimaux for the rigors of the winter; it is our purpose to emulate the bear and woodchuck; we are ready for a

happy, dual hibernation.

To give our sequestration a sweeter flavor, we look through the double windows at the inclement world outside; and we perceive that a miracle has taken place outdoors. There has come a new heaven, a new earth—a winter earth, a winter heaven, calling us to go forth to see and to admire. We find that we are neither woodchucks nor bears, but men in a world of nature. In the country there is no such thing as hibernation.

Our winter earth seems to have contracted with the cold. Houses which had been hidden by summer leafage now show up close at hand, coming near one another as if for companionship. Through the denuded woods shine unexpected bits of pond and river. The ocean, greasy gray or black-blue, rolls, even in calms, with ponderous surges, very different from the light, holiday billows of the summer. In storm, it blots out the sky with feathery spume, and sends to far inland acres the message

of its might.

Often, in an abatement of the storm, we don picturesque sou'westers of the consistency of melted glue, and tack our way to the beach; and watch the drenching tumult, alive to the horizon as with organic life, all straining muscles and jumping nerves. We listen to the wild, rhythmic rushing of the surf, Titanic horses of the sea with curving, gleaming necks and manes whipped into rainbows by the wind. These spray rainbows are unlike the gentle rainbows of the sky, with less of red in them, characterized by opalescent violets, cool blues and vitreous greens. Can they be Keats's rainbows of the salt sand wave? The storm has harvested long windrows of sea clams, the kind that made Thoreau ill on Cape Cod. Gladly we garner them, and eat them with great joy. We must be tougher than Thoreau.

Our winter winds are as inexorable as fate, either the southerly wind purified by an infinity of ocean, or the northerly wind purified by an infinity of wilderness, freely bringing us from Canada an imagined balsamic healing. In our urban

days we had an impression that woods perished with their leaves, but we know now that the spirit of the woods survives the death of autumn. We can hardly tell whether we prefer the woods in summer or in winter. Like the lady who married two husbands, we love them both but in

different ways.

Winter is the time to study the architecture of the forest, to admire the aspiring trunks, the tracery of branches, the lavender mist of twigs in vistas. Nor are all the trees denuded. Many oaks and beeches hold their leaves—thin sheets of hammered bronze; and conifers, almost unnoticed during the months of plumy summer, meet us, green and lustrous, like old friends remaining faithful in adversity. We tread green moss and fern, ground pine and princess pine, the cheerful crimson checker berry and the partridge berry. Where the deer step there step we, and where the fox pursues his quarry.

Then back home in the certitude that Falstaff has not gone out in our absence; that the Anglo-Saxon oak, drowsing on the firedogs—which resemble dachshunds if they resemble anything canine—will awaken at the first touch. As we approach a lark rises from our meadow with a squealing peal, and takes lumbering flight. Chickadees, banqueting on suet, a winter fruit growing on our apple trees, welcome us in our dooryard, friendly, jolly monks in their black

cowls.

We do not have much snow in our corner of maritime New England, but what we do have we make the most of. There is nothing our winds like to play with so much as snow; a six-inch fall will result in a series of bare spots and fantastic, impassable drifts. Then appear the double yokes of oxen to break the way for traffic, as picturesque as if they had stepped out of the Testament, as slow to pass a given point as a St. Patrick's Day parade.

Our neighbors show an amusing contempt for sleighing. They all own sleighs; but they would rather ride twenty miles on wheels in perfect sleighing weather than one on runners. Probably they have been stranded far from home too

often by a sudden thaw. A friend of ours, transplanted from northern New York, pathetically complains of the lack of the snow spirit among the natives. On the slightest flurry she gets out her sleigh, with a fervor almost sufficient to melt the cause of her enthusiasm. Over the bare ground she grinds and

grates with beatific enjoyment.

Our ponds, sheets of water spread out very thin, are quickly frozen, to the joy of youngsters and some oldsters young in heart. In winter the social graces bloom instead of flowers-amateur theatricals, basketball, voluble whist parties, dances, tuning-up practice for later duets of lifelong or monthlong love; sewing circles where scandal, that byproduct of virtuous living, is sewed in every seam.

Spring, in the country, comes in February, blooming in the gorgeous seed catalogues that flutter their vermeil blossoms about us after every mail. These we admire in a fresh triumph of hope over experience. We send for seeds, and sow them. We watch them sprout in sunny windows, thriving vegetable incubator babies. We transplant them to the hotbed, which is nothing more nor less than artificial spring in miniature. When does spring come in the city, if it ever comes? A few bedraggled tulips in May in Union Square, and watering carts disseminating a million malodorous motes of dust for every drop of precipitated moisture.

Some morning, while admiring our artificial spring in the hotbed, we hear a sound on the road, and look up with our acquired country curiosity to see who's

passing. A couple of our neighbors are driving by, with herring nets over their shoulders. Evidently the ponds have overflowed into the ocean, and a fleet of silver submarines is flashing up the current to the spawning beds. A song sparrow throws into the air a careless cadenza from the topmost twig of a diminutive maple tree; a bluebird, all sky and sunset, lights up for an instant our old gray lichened wall.

The real spring, shy, virginal, heralded by these happy harbingers, has come again. In the woods there is a tenuous haze of opening leaves, pale browns and tender greens, delicate ambers, faint mantling reds, like wraiths of the autumn colorings. The streams are riotous, but the sea is calm, smiling and light blue. While our eyes were being blinded by color plates in the seed catalogues, while our noses were buried in the honest, earthy smell of the hotbed, kindly nature had moved our house back to its summer location.

We haul down the storm signal and, emulating the trees, hoist our summer banner to float and flow in the summer The blazing logs on the andirons make way for blossoming boughs. Falstaff is carefully put away, shrouded in newspapers. The last storm window going up to the attic meets the first screen coming down. Our dining car becomes a dining room in which we can Our house entertain city visitors. spreads its gallant sails of vines and herbaceous shrubbery, relaxing in its prim, old-maidenly manner, with the memories of a hundred New England summers. The circle of our year is made complete.



WHAT is the formula for kissing?" "B Anygirl."



MOST women want their novels to be like chocolate creams—all dark and mysterious on the outside and delightfully mushy in the middle.

THE TRUNK IN THE ATTIC

A Department for the Revival of the Art of Letter Writing

Conducted by Louise Closser Hale

[As stated in the issue of November, 1911, this department will end with the June issue, in which we will discuss the contest and announce the prize winners.]

IT may be the promise of buds and blossoms that causes Us to wonder anew at the processes of creation, and, to go into the matter more deeply (for we are very deep), at the ceaseless unfolding of our lives, as inevitable as the seasons—and sometimes as tardy. Even letters unfold (I am afraid they are becoming an obsession with this part of Us), and it is their evolution which commands my attention this month.

Mothers, I believe, get the first letters; then, as we grow more and more steeped in crime, we withdraw our confidences, not so much for the reason, alas, that we would shield her, but for the bumptious argument that this familiar lady in our domestic life could understand no situation which would require handling more subtle than the laying on of a switch from the peach tree.

From a twelve-year-old girl to her mother, giving all the news from home

Vassalboro, Maine.

DEAR MOTHER:

Old Mrs. Crokett has done the best she can—for a deaf woman, I suppose. She can cook and watch our mouths when we eat and talk, which no doubt tells her much. But she can't stop a fight when it is under way. She can't catch on at the start; she only "sees" the situation at its finish. Of course I want you to stay with Mrs. Murray at the beach as long as you can afford and are satisfied; but please write who is the

boss of this house, John or I. Because he is the only boy (man he calls himself since you left), he thinks he is It. I am the oldest and know the most, and I am taking your place to little sister Sade. We had steak for dinner; I dipped my bread in the gravy on the platter. John said: "Do that again if you dare." I never take a dare. I did it again, Sade objecting or protesting. John came down with the carving knife across the back of the dipping hand—the brute! While it did not lay the veins open, it left a purple, pinkish welt—all but open! I went to the grocery store and borrowed six dollars, and I am coming down to see you. I had a lace collar and a pair of red stockings charged to you at John Doherty's store. Hope it is all right. I'll wear them traveling. John and I don't speak, but he told Sade to tell me to wear a coat because it is cold there—but I won't, just for spite. Don't worry. mother; stay as long as you can. The goat is dead-I don't know why. John buried him in your flower gardendon't blame mel Mrs. O'Neil said: "Your mother ought to stay home and mend your clothes 'stead of gallivanting." John heard her. He is the worst. He said: "Wipe the egg off your chin, wash the front of your waist and give us a rest." You've lost her for a neighbor. She said so. He answered her: "Good riddance, bad rubbage; more room for good cabbage." He learned that from Fred Brown, that boy that just got home from Reform School. He is out late with

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him every night—he is the worst boy since you went away. I'm glad we did

get rid of him evenings.

Sade says not to write you any bad news, so I won't. I am leaving tonight. Twelve years old, and I never rode on a car or steamboat, so it's time I did—and I can't live in the house with that Johnnie-without you. Mother, I'll die if I can't see you. Johnnie is not the boss of me, is he? But don't you worry, mother dear; he tore the biggest hole in the seat of his Sunday pants. (A nice "man of the house"!) I just am sick to see you. Mrs. Crokett says: "Oh, my! going to your ma! She won't like it." She makes her mouth and eyes so round and big when she says it. Sade is helping me pack my things into your Boston bag; I'm taking my bracelets and valuable things like that. I shall wear my best things, except the bracelets.

We have all been pretty good since you left. Good-bye. How'll I find you when I get there? After I leave Belfast or Bangor—how do I go? John and I don't speak. He told Sade someone would rob me or I'd get lost. He can't scare me. Don't worry, and stay till I find you or say—please find me.

Your own loving daughter, HATTIE.

From Hattie's to the letter of "Son's" there is the hiatus of years of superiority to any mere parent, of surety that we can do it all ourselves, of confusion as our plans totter, of despair as they fall, of mother again as we lie among the ruins and call for help of her to whom life has brought its full complement of understanding since she brought life to us.

From a son to his mother

DEAR MOTHER:

I am lonesome tonight. I have been lying in my quiet room thinking, thinking of home and of you. Every noise drifting up from the street seems to remind me of those old haunts I am longing for tonight. The tinkle of the sleighbells, the crunch-crunch of the passers-by as they trudge along the

snow-covered walks and the murmured conversation of the crowd all bring back

a faint memory of better times.

And, mother, I have been near the ragged edge lately; and moreover, I have wanted awfully much to start down the toboggan. It seemed the easiest way out, for I am tired of fighting; but you wouldn't let me go. Your dear Spartan face kept reappearing before me, full of love and confidence in my ability to You know, mother, if you succeed. didn't expect so much from me it would be ever so much easier; but still I am glad it is as it is, for it is only such expectations that keep us fighting, always fighting, struggling to qualify and to prove that we are big manly men as mothers think we are.

I was thinking tonight, mother, that my love for you is a little different. P don't love you for giving me birth; I think that was your own responsibility. I don't love you for taking care of me as a child; I think that was your duty. But I do love you for that big overflow of love that kept on loving me long after I was man grown and even after I had left you alone, to try and find my own trail in the tangled bush of life. And always when I stumble over the windfalls or turn in the wrong direction and, feeling tired, want to stay where I have fallen, or keep on the wrong path, in some mysterious way, by letter or by that invisible bond of sympathy between loving hearts, you urge me on with loving words and fond expectations. And once again—this very night—your loving face, appearing over and over upon the screen of my memory, wiped out some ugly picture there until at last it had full possession of my mind, and having gained the mastery gave me new courage and strength again.

I must say good night now, mother, but I will fall asleep with you near me and wake to youth and hope upon the morrow; and remember, dear, that when I have won success and am a man amongst men, you must take all the glory. But I know you won't; you will place all the credit upon your erring but loving

Son.

What maddens me is the realization that I shall never know how all these letter writers are going to end. This third, for instance, who, too, has flown to the shelter of her mother's arms, yet doubts her security even there. From the sophistication of a misspent life I decry this frankness of hers. I—but I talk too much—here it is:

From a wife to her husband

Elmcroft, Newbury, Mass.

You will see by this heading, dear John, that I am at mother's. It was Mary's Easter vacation, so I could take her with me when I ran away. We shall

stay here until I hear from you.

Yes, I ran away from our home—nothing but that describes the way of my going—and you must be told the reason, for until you know it you will not consent to let me join you at the mines. The danger and hardship for me there are not to be compared with those which I am facing here alone. John, I must come. I do not feel safe—not even with mother—away from your side.

What will you say when you know that the thing which terrifies me is a monster which has suddenly sprung to full grown life within myself? That I, who have been so calmly happy all my life, so thoroughly in command of my emotions, so sure that I knew my nature through and through, should come to this sorry pass, has shocked and humiliated me unspeakably: But oh, dear John, it has made me wise. I share the weakness now; I stand upon the very brink of the fall to which I so long gave scorn and despising—self-righteous fool that I was!

We have been so serenely content with each other—I felt no lack—I craved no greater joy than I knew as your wife—I believed that I had sounded the heights and depths of love in your arms! And I am wondering if you are self-deceived as I have been, or if you, too, have known the terror of yourself as I know it now. It may be waiting for you in the coming years; perhaps you are strong enough to cope with it in silence and alone—I, alas, am not. I need you as I have never

needed you before. I long for you as I shall never long for you again.

Were I free as air to choose between the sweet and calm content that I have known with you, and this wild tumult of passion that threatens to sweep me from every mooring, how swiftly I would fly to you, as I am fleeing to you now! Such enslaving joy is an accursed thing. And yet I have learned its terrible power lurks sleeping in every woman's heart. Happy the ones who go to their quiet graves and never have dreamed of that unroused master within their breasts. At last I understand those bitter, blighting words that fell upon the ears of Eve which were to make her daughters for all time the slaves of love. I know now that the true unlost Eden was ours, John, where we were mates, not lord and vassal, in love's law. That Eden waits for me at your side. You will not deny me entrance there!

> Your Evelyn.

A fine letter, yes, I admit it. But, will John be fine? Has she not, in her confession, lost that Paradise of calm for which she longs? Would John want this humiliating outpouring? Perchance he reads Browning, and will reply:

Where the apples redden Never pry, Lest we lose our Eden, You and I.

I wonder if anyone feels—with methat a marriage of 1860 is not like that of 1912? I wonder if 1860 felt that way about 1800? And, most horrible of all, I wonder if 1970 will feel toward us as I do now toward 1860? This fourth comes to me with the dear, homely face of Lincoln stamped on the letterhead. I handle it reverently, and I hope I may be allowed to keep it always. Here is what an old-fashioned husband wrote:

From a sailor under fire to his wife

U. S. Steamer Albatross, Mobile Bay, March 24, 1865.

DEAR WIFE:

I received your four letters today and was overjoyed to hear that you were all well. We have been lying here almost three weeks now. Have been up the bay (last Saturday) and shelled the woods as far as Alabama City, but the Rebs did not show themselves; but since then the fleet or a part of it has been shelling up along the shore and the Rebs have been firing back. We can see them all the time, although we are six or seven miles from them. None of our folks have got hurt yet for we are behind the iron walls of our gunboats. . . .

Had to leave this, and now commence again. It is night and we are out on the blockade, nine or ten miles from Fort Gaines and Fort Morgan. There was a man died on board today; he died of consumption. We will bury him tomorrow. They made him a coffin and a headboard, and I put his name on it.

Well, Alice, tomorrow is my birthday. Twenty-seven years old—getting along in years. We have been fishing and have good times in general. I received two letters from you today; was very glad to hear that you were all so well.

I cannot get any money now but shall before long, so be prudent, for it might be longer than I think it will before I can draw any. Our captain has gone up the river in another gunboat but I think that he will be back shortly. The mail leaves at three o'clock, and it's most that now. Cheer up until another time; kiss the babies for me; give my respects to all my friends. Good day, dear Alice, from

Your Loving Husband. P. S. Let me know how much money you have. You say you have written five letters, and I have received five, so I have them all; but direct as I say and there will be no trouble. I think we shall go up the bay in a few days. Think we shall have a chance to go into battle, but it is not like the army. The fleet is on the move all the time, back and forward; the ironclads go ahead and the wooden boats in the rear, so we stand a good chance to see it but not much of a chance to get hit, for we draw so much water that we cannot get near enough to the hottest of it and perhaps not near enough to fire a shot. We have got to go to New Orleans or somewhere else before long for provisions, but you must direct to the West Gulf Squadron as I am there all the time. With a kiss for you all.

YOUR LOVING HUSBAND.

I should hate to imagine this man receiving word from his wife that she was on the brow of the pit—and yet he has a 1912 note in his letter: he dwells on money, and urges prudence. Perhaps, after all, a husband is a species. Possibly this girl, Eloise, in the letter below, would not have horrified him. She might even have made a brave "dear wife," with babies, and proved herself also of the same species of "the war of '61." I may be wrong altogether. At least, I have learned enough to know that I generally know nothing.

From an up-to-date girl to a man who has proposed

San Diego, January 25th.

DEAR ROBERT:

The reading of your letter was accomplished under difficulties. A proposal of marriage comes inopportunely, to say the least, when one has two suitcases to pack and a baker's dozen of other things call for attention during the short hour that intervenes before starting for La Jolla, where a house party is to be given in my honor.

To please your methodical mind, however, I'll hastily sort out from some little mental pigeonhole a set of symptoms for the determining of one's cardiacal condition. The following seem to have become standard and real clinchers:

I—If, while reaching for the cream or sugar or lemon, his hand very accidentally touches hers, she turns cold and shivery and thrilly. Now when your hand very accidentally touches mine, Robert, I only think what a strong, capable, well-looking hand it is. My heart doesn't thrill the least little bit.

2—If a girl suddenly meets him whom she loves, she becomes tongue-tied and falls to twisting her sash ends or doing some other thing equally well calculated to increase his admiration. Can you recall a single instance when your presence has stemmed the tide of my elo-

quence?

3—When a girl hears the well known footstep of her adored one, her heart flutters so alarmingly that instantaneous suffocation threatens. Your footstep is all that a footstep should be, light, springy and yet firm. But I've always remained calm as destiny, or any other fixed order of things when my practised ear distinguished it from another.

4—If a girl's beloved is called away for a time, she pines to the proportions of an Egyptian silhouette during his absence. When you were in Europe—the year that mother let out the tucks in my dresses and taught me to do my hair in a Psyche knot-I'm sure I missed the tramps over the hills fully as much if not more than I missed you. Instead of pining, I shot up—as the saying goes into a plump and ordinarily pleasing young person. As you can see for yourself, not a single rule works out in your favor—a fact which causes me to feel remorse, together with several of its synonyms, such as sympathetic sorrow, regret, grief, compassion and so forth.

What does a man expect who deliberately sets out to psychologize a girl into accepting him? Feminine intuition is not to be hoodwinked, Robert. Wooing by science is indeed a twentieth century method, that belongs with aeroplanes, wireless telegraphy and other queer

things of today, I suppose.

You casually allude to having taken Florence Pendergast out in the runabout. Now even though Florence is one of those frightfully plain persons, she might develop charm any minute, despite her freckles and the mole on her chin. Charm, I'm told, works more deadly havoc than beauty. Please don't do it

again, dear.

You say you may be out of town on my return home next week. My flittings, though unimportant, have been quite frequent, yet always I have returned to you! Had you gone creakily down on your knees, like fat Mr. Pettigrew, I should have giggled myself into hysterics, without ever awakening to the true state of affairs. But when I read your dear, beautiful, unaccustomed

words, my heart fell to beating as only the heart of an athletic girl can beat. It is still singing the refrain: "I love you so. Come soon, O man that I am to marry." Yet when you take me in your arms I shall be as dumb as the shyest schoolgirl. I could write forever but the big gray motor is honking impatiently and I must go.

With immeasurable love,

Yours, ELOISE.

Oh, dear, the tragedy of weeding out manuscript that isn't typed! I put them aside gently; I'm not as unfeeling as I appear, you know, although We get very callous. One stack of letters is now labeled: "Love—N. G.," another "Mothers—dubious;" and a third: "Mixed brothers." Speaking of relatives, here is a sister one which is a sample of my theory of epistolary evolution. We sisters are developing critical faculties, and begin by practising on brother. Personally this leaping at any kind of a man's throat has my approval—and how well she leaps!

From a slightly known authoress to a well known author who will publish her letters

Your last book is before me; and it makes me wonder so.

Do you know, I prize my imagination more than my sense of humor; so I am sorry that I read somebody's description of Heaven, "gay with colors we cannot even imagine." I've been trying, when I am dummy or when the electric light on the corner keeps me awake, to imagine new colors, and I can't. It always turns out, just when I think I've got it, to be some last spring's sartorial color, elephant's breath or London smoke or Alice—no, Helen—pink. It's like trying to imagine chaos, or the naming of Asia, or what would happen if somebody spoke from his pew when the priest said: "Or else forever after hold his peace." You know people can never do that.

Can it be that I have only imagined my imagination? That it doesn't exist, any more than Democracy, or the Devil?

But I live in a mundane world. In it there is Tuesdane bridge, a Wednesdane Suffragist meeting, Fridane sweeping and Saturdane baking; and almost every moment the telephone bell is ringing, and a hand organ is Louisiana Louing or sighing to rest itself under my window. You live in a different world, a dark world, where, if possible, you may find an imagination. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." He said that light combined with darkness-white light against black-made colors. I wonder if we truly appreciate Johann Wolfgang von Goethe? Gregory the Great invented Purgatory, and Aristophanes of Alexandria invented punctuation—but he who finds the rainbow's end is greater than either. He was talking only of colors—real, dress goods, landscape garden colors. But I choose to think of the light of creation.

You live in a world of star-shot darkness, in which the woman who sweeps and the bridge players and the tired son of Italy who plays "Ah, I Have Sighed to Rest Me" a thousand million times on one afternoon have gone to bed. You write at night. At the beginning of black dark you find yourself alone-you and the stars. And I think that what Goethe said was true. Light, the light of creation, against darkness, should make colors. He should have added: "If it is real light it will make new colors."

My friend, have you that light? That is what I am wondering when your books come out, and are always illuminated by my elephant's breath, my London smoke, my Helen pink, always bright and thick with my colors. You live where the light of creation should prosper; in the world of star-shot darkness-against which dark, light should make new colors. Have you that light?

God said: "Let there be light." meant the light of creation as well as other lights. If—if the command didn't embrace you—why don't you stop writing and try plumbing or butchering or traveling for scented soap? We used to discuss this in the old days. You can't write. If you had the light of creation you wouldn't always, always be using my colors, or materials.

Upon reading her letter over I tremble, for I was sure this woman said "Brother," and yet she hasn't. I don't know who she is, and yet I feel it's to her brother. I hope I am not growing occult—I shall rush into the "Love Letters O.K." and warm up.

From an unloved woman to the man

DEAREST:

You do not love me. Through my open window I can look a long way into the night—farther than I could ever look before. Do you know, my beloved, what it is I see? Climbing, forever climbing those heights of material prosperity which have meant so much more to you than I have, I see you forcefully and relentlessly lifting yourself while I wander, stumbling feebly after you, yet always in the dark of the valley below.

Tonight as I sit here, seeking one ray of guidance from all this ghastly chaos called "life," I could say to you now as I said in the beginning: "I love you." Sometimes it seems strangely unnatural that I should have loved you. You are so much less than 1.. y ideal. I feel now, as I have never felt before, the vast insurmountable difference between us. You are well poised and keen, strong and selfish. I can see you now with your well kept nails and civilized smile—the two things which most disclose your nature. Yes, I see you now where you always look your best: at a full dinner table surrounded by well dressed, less clever people than yourself, your domineering personality swaying each one there. There, indeed, you are master.

With that picture in my mind I could be moved to self-pity. All my life I had longed for a bit of the world's only happiness—beauty. When you came, with your big shoulders and splendid physique, it seemed inevitable that your soul, too, should be beautiful. Dearest, oh, my dearest, why can't you love me? I wanted to be so much to you, even for your own sake. Do you know that I would have made you happy? I must have made you happy. Such desire as

mine could not have failed.

I do not know whether you will ever see this. Sometimes when the soul of me has been hushed by the presence of nature's perfection on a night like this, an odd aloofness comes to me, a thing in which you have no part. I am lifted higher even than you can ever dream of climbing. Fleeting now, it comes to me again—yes, fleeting it is, this spirit of my love—and now—ah, now I know that I have seen heights you may never see and have descended into abysses of suffering your soul could not even fathom. Aye, on the wings of a love broader than the eternal heavens themselves, I am lifted, forever, among my own!

Good night, oh, shell of man; for I shall sleep now and my dreams shall be wonderful visions and delicately woven bits of beauty. I see at last—I see, that to me has been given the grander thing.

I am at peace—at peace!

MARY.

There is but one word of encouragement for Mary beyond offering her Time's salve box and that maddening advice to dig into society's tool chest for another nail (when at such a time we feel that we never want to see even a tack again). But listen, Mary: when they are no good we have only their charming traits, not their fine ones, to forget. They have helped you halfway through. Here is another sufferer who has found that she is better than her choice. Yet we are not so new in that. The Portuguese Nun wrote: "Oh, if you would only let me go on loving you!" And that was in 1600.

From a disillusioned woman to the man February 6th, 1902.

DEAR BOY:

And so, after three years, we have come to the parting of the ways; and as this is the last letter I shall ever write you, please bear with me for a little while and try to see my point of view as well as your own.

You claim that my letters and my friendship have lent so much brightness to an otherwise barren life that it requires a heroic act of self-sacrifice to give them up. You say further that I have typified your highest ideal of friendship in truth, sincerity and congeniality, and

no woman ever gave more or asked for less—and many more high flown metaphors and well turned phrases. But these are words, boy; do they stand for truth?

Then how can your vaunted self-sacrifice be heroic, when it only brings pain to one you claim it is intended to spare? If my letters have given you pleasure, it has been a mutual one; then why may I not give in proportion to what I get? And if—as you claim—I so far exceed the measure, I am still unconscious of any sense of loss. To give-is not that the keynote to all the finer emotions of a woman's nature? And if, since you liken me to Arabella Crane in Bulwar's old romance. I have been no niggard, may I not say this giving has been the supremest happiness of my life? Again, do you think it chivalrous thus to force my hand? But I've played the game dealt out to me till my soul is weary of the

If my letters perchance have lightened an otherwise dark hour, the very knowledge that *I* could dispel the gloom was compensation enough. If my ambition could teach yours how to soar, I'd give you all I had; and if my tender sympathy could prove an antidote for bitter thoughts, it was yours unasked.

But all this you know and have known since that night when you plunged your bold blue eyes in mine and asked me if I loved you! I lied then—the only time I have ever told you an untruth—but I did it bravely, while I knew that truth, naked, looked from their depths, if my lips did bear false witness. Since then we have both religiously sealed up this page of ancient history, and clothed this creation of our hearts with the mantle of platonic friendship, as if we both did not know it was pure sophistry.

I once devoutly believed in this ideal relation of mind for mind, but—I'm no longer dealing in words, boy, and I, even unemotional I, must acknowledge it's a fake, for I'm but a weak yielding woman, after all. But you knew—always you knew; and if I had no eyes for other men when you were near, you must acknowledge that you put forth every power with which nature had endowed you to

hold the esteem I had voluntarily given

you.

For instance, have you forgotten the letter you wrote me after that night when you had so ruthlessly torn aside the veil of my self-delusion? I have it yet, breathing but one thought in every line: to forgive you and let you come back. Do you remember the box of roses you sent me from Washington, after a silence of many weeks, when you again thought you had forfeited my esteem? The shattered leaves of those flowers have gone to dust, but the faint, delicate perfume of those tiny suppliants still brings up memories of you. Then you wrote and asked me to marry you a queer sort of a proposal, but just such as you might be expected to make, stating all the sensible arguments that you could put forth as reasons for such a step. Oh, boy, I did not want sense; I wanted nonsense. I did not want to be told you needed me and could not give me up to another man; I wanted you to say: "I love you and I want you!"

I answered as such a letter merited, for if I seemed hard it was because you had failed in the giving, not I. Wherever you went, and no matter how long your business detained you, did you not come back to me as inevitably as summer follows winter? Then what was it that brought you? Was it any real charm you had discovered in the woman, or was it from a petty sense of gratified vanity, to make sure of your conquest? I know your face so well that I have felt I could almost read your thoughts as the changing emotions were reflected in your eyes, but as yet I know no answer to this Sphinx's riddle. I loved you, and if to you all this spelled friendship—well, "let him take who has the power and let

him keep who can!"

Now you will again drop out of my life, as you've done before, but this time it is the end. Is it a case of cherchez la femme for the real reason of your "heroic self-sacrifice"? If so, I sincerely hope you will be happy, and that she will be to you all the things wherein I have failed.

But go on with your work and make your life an achievement of the best. Then only can I feel that these last years have not been wholly lost. But the eternal Ego will not be utterly suppressed, so I beg you, as you are strong, be generous, and do not write or try to see me again. It can only make matters worse, for your greatest kindness to me now is to help me to forget.

And so for the last and only time, dear

boy, I kiss you good night.

Your Friend.

After this I can offer nothing more exquisite in the way of analysis. We sisters have finished evoluting in that direction. The contribution serves, moreover, to prove that there is something of subtlety in a lad who chucks a lady love by insisting on the privilege of a clammy friend.

Perhaps I am wrong (again) when I said in the March number that the creatures fail in delicate methods. Here is a letter to me because he thought—I am positive—that I would surely publish it. Why, I get lots of them! One addressed me as Louise, and one disliked me and thought I was "too clever to love." That man should not be encouraged; otherwise it would be a temptation to tell him that, while I am too clever to love, I am not too clever to be loved. I print a bit of my friend's letter to show how welcome a nice one is:

From a chronic bachelor to the impersonal editor of "The Trunk in the Attic"

DEAR MADAM:

For some illogical reason we look upon women as the natural writers of letters, probably because, when it comes to particular details for which we do not want to be responsible, we put them on the other sex. But your open invitation gives me a delicious opportunity, which none of my friends would accord without protest, of talking frankly on that most absorbing of all subjects (to the letter writer)—the First Person Singular.

Being a bachelor, born and not made, need not forbid me so innocuous an indulgence, and yet I hesitate—the celibate life in either sex of a past generation was prone to engender a certain instinct of retirement, a foolish self-con-

sciousness which feared to rush in and keep step with the angels of the initiative. Had I ever been Mendelssohned down an aisle with one, undoubtedly I should have found myself waiting for a certain white satin shimmer to clear the way for me. This is an unfortunate temperament for a man, and has been by way of giving me a contemplative, and perhaps introspective existence, which my nephew Billy's mother calls It is difficult to convince her that I have the same legal right to a place in the calms of life as she has to her own in the boisterous breakers. I, too, made my way through the breakers. but chose not to remain there—in spite of Billy, who cannot understand my imperviousness to the power of football as the propagator of future Presidents.

But this preamble, my dear madam, is merely to thank you for an uncommon opportunity. I adore it! And, after a lifetime of talking about someone else, the freedom of letting oneself go, of indulging one's natural egotism, is, as you may perceive, somewhat intoxicating. My few remaining contemporaries, who confess either to having attended the Centennial or to having been eye witnesses of Lincoln's assassination, are far too busily employed with bridge or with the mechanism of the act of living to write letters, or to read them—time being the only thing we spend without getting full value for it. In this I except my Cousin Letitia; she is not typical of the present age of women, yet to all outward semblance she is a part of it, being too distinctly a lady of dignity not to live up to the obligations of her position. Letitia's white hair is becomingly dressed; her eyes and skin are younger than she; her nose is the distinguished lineal descendant of her own family portraits; she uses a glass where her grandmother wore spectacles; but for all that I never quite disassociate Letitia from a far-away impression left by Meredith's "Aux Italiennes"—the muslin-dressed girl in the south, the soft, warm air, the "one bird singing alone to its nest, and one star over the tower," and through it all the scent of jessamine. Letitia is a comfort and dependence to the masculine mind. I sometimes wonder how much she knows about me; enough, at any rate, to make of her a trusted and congenial friend, the highpriestess of a corner near the brass andirons and candlesticks, where I love to stop in cool twilights, with the excuse of leaving daffodils, and to exchange opinions about life in general. I am glad for this reason that Letitia never married. When I asked her once why she had not, she replied because she had liked one man too much to marry him. I think it possible that Letitia would be capable of that extraordinary refining process, a passion of the imagination, the whitest flame of all emotional life.

But it is time for old Dick to lock up the house, and I have selfishly taken advantage of your gracious permission to spend a most agreeable evening. Accept my warmest thanks, my dear madam. Did we cultivate frequently the indulgence of letter writing, should we not become a more truthful people, I wonder?

With all respect, I am,
Faithfully yours,
ANTHONY PARKER.

I think it charming although anyone can see he loves Letitia and not me. I don't care whom they adore so long as they do. As I reach the end of my day's work and read the last of the "Love O.K.'s," a mist comes up and hides things on my desk. A woman whom I value brought it in, and asked me to print it, not for money or for the prize, but in the hope that the one who wrote and sent her—with his first and last love letter—an armful of white lilacs will know how much it means to her.

From a man to an actress

Waldorf-Astoria, New York, January 28, 1912.

DEAR MADAME:

I have loved three actresses in my time—Rose Eytinge, Rosina Vokes and you, and the best of it is that none of you ever knew it, so that perhaps is the reason that these three love affairs of mine brought only happiness. The affair with Rose Eytinge—but that's too long ago

to speak of. As for Rosina Vokes—ah, dear Rosina, how you charmed your mute adorer with your big eyes! Little you guessed one night at Daly's how a sedate gentleman in the front row was struggling with an impulse to jump over the footlights (gas in those days) and pay that "Milliner's Bill." But you, madame, I loved best of all. I could give you many reasons why I know this, but one will do. It is that while Rosina took Rose's place and you took Rosina's, no one followed you. You were Eclipse, with no successor, and when you left the stage I mourned truly. I did not cross the threshold of a theater for two years.

It was only the other day, and quite by chance, that I learned who and where you are; and on the same day my doctor told me it was time to put my house in order. While doing so I came across the guest room now so long empty. As the house is soon to be torn down, I thought perhaps you would pardon this first and last impertinence that I might let you know that there is a house, crumbly on its foundations, long since out of fashion, and too much like a thousand others to make it worth identification, in which a room has been kept for many years sacred to your memory.

Will you all please tell everyone about it, and perhaps he will learn of this before the soul of him has left its oldfashioned home.



SILET

By Ezra Pound

WHEN I behold how black immortal ink
Drips from my deathless pen—ah, well-a-way!
Why should we stop at all for what I think?
There is enough in what I chance to say.

It is enough that we once came together; What is the use of setting it to rime? When it is autumn, do we get spring weather, Or gather May of harsh north-windish Time?

It is enough that we once came together;
What if the wind have turned against the rain?
It is enough that we once came together;
Time hath seen this and will not turn again,
And who are we, who know that last intent,
To plague Tomorrow with a testament!



THIS woman's sphere the suffragettes are after seems to be the earth.

MRS. POTIPHAR PAYS A CALL

By Samuel D. McCoy

CENE—Billiard room of Riverview, city residence of the Prince of Heliopolis, Egypt, overlooking the Pelusiac branch of the Nile—thirty-seven hundred years ago. Joseph, son-in-law to the Prince of Heliopolis, is discovered seated; he is a man in his thirties, extraordinarily handsome and well dressed; he is reading a Board of Trade ticker; his wife, Asenath, reclines on a chaise-longue, curling her lip over some late fiction.

ASENATH (yawning)—Stupidest thing! Joseph (absently)—H'm.

ASENATH-Stupid, I say-isn't it?

JOSEPH-Awfully.

ASENATH—I get so tired of these Assyrian publishers; they haven't sense enough to use papyrus, and that maid I sent away yesterday let fall two of the most exciting chapters and broke them into bits.

Josepн—Umm'm.

ASENATH—You're not listening—can't you leave that thing alone for one minute?

Joseph—I heard you.

TICKER—Click, click, click-click; click, click-click, g-r-r!

JOSEPH (reading moodily)—December's at seventy and an eighth.

ASENATH—Are we going to take a cottage at Naucratis this year?

TICKER—Click, clickety-click.

JOSEPH (reading)—Three-eighths.

(Enter a slave, who presents cards to

ASENATH and remains waiting.)
ASENATH (reading)—"Captain Potiphar, Mrs. Potiphar." Heavens, the Potiphars!

Joseph—Great Rameses!

ASENATH—I suppose I shall have to change. And it's too beastly hot.

Joseph—No, no; you look very well, my dear.

ASENATH—What in the world brought them into town in this weather?

JOSEPH—Are we at home?

Asenath—Why not?

Joseph—Well—oh, nothing. Suppose you receive them—in the audience room, dear.

ASENATH—I shall do nothing of the sort. They sent cards to us both. They're your friends, you know.

Joseph—I don't feel up to seeing visi-

tors this afternoon.

ASENATH—Nonsense! You told me five minutes ago that you felt extraordinarily fit.

Joseph-Yes-but that was then, you

know.

Asenath—They're waiting, remember.

Joseph—I can't see them.

ASENATH (to the slave)—Show Mr. and Mrs. Potiphar in here.

(The slave bows and goes out.)

JOSEPH—Asenath! Didn't you hear me say I was not in?

ASENATH-Yes.

JOSEPH—Well, I meant it. I can't see that woman.

ASENATH—Piffle! Why should you be afraid of her?

Joseph (vaguely)—Oh, well—you see —(Explosively)—I don't like her, dammit!

ASENATH (shocked) — Joseph! And you a Biblical character!

Joseph-I don't like her.

ASENATH-You don't mean to say

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there was anything in that old story? I never believed it.

Joseph—There was nothing in the

story—nothing.

ASENATH (suspiciously)—Then why are you so set against seeing her?

Joseph—I'm not.

ASENATH (reflectively)—If it is true that she fell in love with you and you jilted her, she would be the offended one and not you; yet she doesn't hesitate to call. Joseph, did you tag around after Mrs. Potiphar and get thrown over by her before you proposed to me? Answer me truthfully, for I don't propose to have any woman putting on airs over me!

JOSEPH (trying to laugh)—I assure you that there was never anything between

us. I know her, and that's all.

SLAVE (appearing at the doorway)
—Captain Potiphar and Mrs. Potiphar.
(The slave goes out; the POTIPHARS enter.)

MRS. POTIPHAR—Oh, Asenath, darling, I'm so glad we've found you in!

ASENATH—So glad to see you, dear! How d'y'do, Captain Potiphar? Such a pleasant surprise!

POTIPHAR—Glad, frightfully, you

know.

JOSEPH (adopting a hearty manner)—Mrs. Potiphar, charmed! How d'y'do, Potiphar? Quite like old times to see you both!

Mrs. Potiphar—Ah, Joseph, how d'y'do? Why, you're getting a waist-

line, aren't you? Dear me!

JOSEPH (savagely, buttoning his coat over his waistcoat)—Not at all. Haven't

gained ten pounds in ten years!

MRS. POTIPHAR (shaking her finger playfully)—Fibber! You're as picturesque about facts as ever, Joseph.

Asenath—Did you come down by

boat?

Mrs. Potiphar—No; Captain Potiphar wanted to try out his new chariot at touring, so we came that way.

JOSEPH—Must have been a bit warm. POTIPHAR—No, no; made our own breeze, y'know; best chariot on the market.

Joseph—Good, eh?

POTIPHAR—Yaas. Made Cairo in no time; lunched at Shepheard's.

Mrs. Potiphar—The hotel fairly reeks with Israelites.

POTIPHAR (his jaw dropping at his wife's remark, and smiling uneasily at Joseph)—No offense, old man. Not your sort, of course; lot of bounders—merchants, y'know.

Mrs. Potiphar—So silly of me to

forget!

ASENATH—Well, we're so glad you're here. You must stay. (Putting her arm around Mrs. Potiphar.) You know, dear, you and I have never really had a good comfy talk. And you knew Joseph so well before I even had met him.

Mrs. Potiphar—Did I really know

you well, Joseph?

Joseph (mirthlessly)—Haw, haw! Ротірнак—Oh, I say, y'know, my dear!

ASENATH (with her cheek against MRS. POTIPHAR'S)—Joseph has told me over and over that when he first came to Egypt he'd have been dreadfully homesick if you hadn't mothered him so well.

Mrs. Potiphar—"Mothered"! Oh, yes, I did come out two seasons before

you, darling.

TICKER—Click, click, clickety-click. POTIPHAR—Oh, I say, how's the market today, Joseph?

Joseph-Stronger.

Potiphar (anxiously) — Corn, of course.

Joseph — Of course. December's

touched seventy-one.

ASENATH—Oh, if you two are going to talk Corn— Come on, dear; I've some of the sweetest Assyrian drawnwork—

(She leads MRS. POTIPHAR to one side and returns hastily to whisper to JOSEPH. POTIPHAR has stepped to the ticker and is examining the tape with a frown.)

ASENATH (aside)—What is her first name, Joseph? She calls me by mine, and I can't think of hers to save my life.

JOSEPH—Goos—I don't remember, either. Don't believe I ever knew it.

ASENATH—Then "Goosie" was just

your pet name for her?

(She goes back to MRS. POTIPHAR, with a triumphant glance over her shoulder at JOSEPH, whose face shows his consciousness of his step.)

POTIPHAR (reading)—Seven-eighths.

Good Apis—seventy-two! Look here, old chap, I hear that Pharaoh's behind this bull market. You know all about it, of course—is that straight?

Joseph—Can't say, I'm sure.

Potiphar—Oh, I say, let bygones be

bygones-

(JOSEPH lights a cigar without replying.) Mrs. Potiphar—Did you hear that the Princess Hra and her charioteer ran off and were married in Thebes day before yesterday?

ASENATH—Really?

Mrs. Potiphar—Really! But of course you knew the talk—it's been coming on for weeks.

POTIPHAR (continuing)—I'm in this

quite a deal, you know.

JOSEPH—You look for a decline, then? POTIPHAR (wiping his forehead)—My brokers are bearish. Do tell what you think—that's a good chap!

JOSEPH (slowly)—I understand that the crop is to be bigger than ever-

bumper.

POTIPHAR—Government report out? Joseph—Not yet; I give you that ahead.

(POTIPHAR looks at him with an agony of inquiry. JOSEPH nods three times, with extreme solemnity.)

Potiphar—Say, that's awf'ly white,

old man! Sha'n't forget it, y'know. Mrs. Potiphar—What a lovely Tem-

ple of the Sun you have here!

ASENATH—Hush; don't let Joseph hear you. He's so fearfully unorthodox.

Mrs. Potiphar (smiling dreamily)— I remember when he— (She stops abruptly.)

JOSEPH—You're in Corn pretty strong,

I take it, Potiphar?

Potiphar—Just between you and me —down to my suspenders.

JOSEPH (smiling)—You Egyptians make us Israelites look like pikers.

POTIPHAR (complacently)—Well, I've always been a man of action and that sort of thing, y'know.

JOSEPH (drily)—As, for instance, when you turned me over to the District At-

torney.

Potiphar—Oh, come; you know I couldn't help it. (In a lower tone.) The missus raised Ned till I did it. I never believed it of you, old fellow—ridiculous on the face of it. Why should you be playing about with Mrs. Potiphar, a young dog like yourself, with all Egypt to choose from? Ha, ha!

JOSEPH-Still, two years of the stone pile was a bit thick, now wasn't it?

Potiphar—Dashed if I see yet how you got in so strong with Pharaoh!

JOSEPH (smiling enigmatically)—Shoot

a little pool, old man?

(They move toward the pool table.)

Mrs. Potiphar—Potiphar, you can't begin playing; you've that rear tire to see about, you know.

Potiphar—Darn the chariot! Let's

go back by camel.

Mrs. Potiphar—And Asenath hasn't shown us her boys yet.

ASENATH—So sorry—they're with

their governess at the seashore.

Mrs. Potiphar—We must be going. Do come in and see us when you're in Memphis. You, too, Joseph.

Joseph—Delighted. Same house?

Mrs. Potiphar—Same house—I'm so glad you remember it. (Brightly.) Goodbye, Asenath, darling. Come, Potiphar.

ASENATH—Oh, don't go. Let me

ring for tea.

Potiphar—Afraid we can't, y'know.

Must reach Cairo before dark.

Mrs. Potiphar — Good-bye. (She kisses Asenath.) Good-bye, Joseph.

Joseph and Asenath—Good-bye. So

glad you came!

(CAPTAIN POTIPHAR and his wife go out. As the door closes, ASENATH bursts into tears.)

ASENATH—The horrid, horrid cat! Joseph—Oh, see here, don't be silly! ASENATH (sobbing) — It's true — it's

truel

Joseph—Let me tell you—they're as good as busted right now.

Asenath—What do you mean?

JOSEPH—That ass Potiphar has put his last stater on selling Corn. He's a bankrupt today. I own every bushel in Egypt. It will be all over in another week.

Asenath (checking her tears)—Then you've squared things with her?

Joseph—Down to the ground. ASENATH—Oh, you angel!

PEEVINGS OF A PESSIMIST

By Isabel Chase

All is not glad that titters.

You may send a boy to college, but you can't make him think.

Nothing ventured, nothing gone.

One swallow doesn't make a bummer.

Many hands dislike work.

It's never too late to lend.

If a miss were as good as her smile!

A lean purse for a long face.



PHANTOMS

By Edgar Saltus

BEHIND the tapestries my hand hath set Along the haunted halls of yesterday, Reproachfully, with lowered eyes, there stray The melancholy phantoms of regret. They loiter there, unbanishable yet, Until the silent past resumes its sway, When, summoning their own, they pass away To fill the cells of memory's oubliette. Then from the chambers of my soul a new And warning murmur of fresh grief arrives; I see the specters of tomorrow start, For grief has phantoms of the future, too, And those it loosens to beset our lives Are sadder still than those it lets depart.

WHO'S WHO IN WAGNER

By John Kendrick Bangs

CIEGLINDE—Twin sister to Siegmund, and daughter of Wotan by a walking trip through the Wäl-Chief lady-in-distress sung Country. in the Wagnerian mythology. Never out of trouble, but always singing even when matters were at their worst. Possessed of a soprano voice worth not less than five hundred dollars a night. Abducted early in life by Hunding, a villainous character of Neidung descent, who wooed her with a club, and averted possible domestic complications later by assassinating his mother-in-law as the initial step of his courtship. Upon completion of the Hunding House, became housekeeper, barmaid and general chorewoman of that establishment. Made no pretense of loving her husband, whose rude behavior in killing her mother without even being introduced showed him to be a man utterly without polish. Suffered in silence, varied by occasional running of scales, until the arrival of her brother Siegmund, with whom she immediately fell in love, failing to distinguish with all her womanly intuitions between fraternal and conjugal affection. Assisted the latter to acquire the souvenir sword Nothung, left sticking in the ash tree by Wotan as a special favor to the first strong arm to come that way, and then eloped with him, leaving no address for the benefit of the deserted Hunding. As a result of this elopement she dropped quite out of society and her name was erased from the Social Register by the Goddess Fricka, who was highly scandalized by the unhappy affair. Became the mother of Siegfried, in a hastily improvised hospital on the heights, under the nursing of Brunhilde, her stepsister by her morganatic step-

mother Erda. Recreations, none. Address, not found.

Hunding—A strong arm basso, given to arson, assassination and abduction. Descended from the Neidungs, the lineal posterity of Envy, Hatred and Malice. A man of crude nature, utterly lacking in Chesterfieldian graces, and not an expert in the etiquette of any period this side of the Stone Age. In modern times would have been classed either with the second story men and panhandlers, or at best as a subway guard. Tolerated only because of his voice, which could skim the deepest and most unfathomable depths without grating on the bottom. Distinguished himself originally by his successful assassination of Mrs. Wotan Number Thirty-three, Series Q, Mortal Section, sometimes known as Mrs. Wolf, Wotan having married her under the name of Walse, chiefly because he was traveling light at the time, and in the absence of his luggage was forced to appear at the ceremony in a wolfskin instead of a frock coat. After assassinating Mrs. Wolf, he cremated the lady's remains on an impromptu pyre made of her summer bungalow, and retired from the scene, carrying with him her daughter Sieglinde, whom he subsequently married at the point of his club, making her landlady of the Hunding House, which he built for the accommodation of unwary travelers. Deserted later by Mrs. Hunding, who eloped with the first guest to arrive after the grand opening, who was none other than her twin brother Sigmund, causing the most notorious social scandal of the time. Failing to obtain redress in the courts, there being no adequate divorce laws operating in the Renos of the time, he decided to secure the necessary decree by means of a personal interview with the eloping couple. Overtook the fugitives on the mountainside, and effected a compromise by means of which the co-defendant Sigmund breathed his last. Heavy motif in pathetic ballad composed and sung exclusively by Sieglinde, entitled, "Gone With A Handsomer Man." Recreations, chasing, highway robbery and arson. Address, Ash Tree Tavern, formerly the Hunding House, Walsekill Mountains.

Brunhilde—Head of the Suffragette League of Valhalla. Eighty horsepower soprano, and leader of the Valkyries. Daughter of Wotan by his stepwife Erda, somewhat given to insurgency. Step-maiden aunt and wife of Siegfried, and incidentally, through misunderstanding, wife to Gunther. Colonel of the Amazon Aerial Cavalry, and official spear carrier in the Valkyrie Chorus. Champion vocal gymnast of the gods, lifting the heaviest bars of concentrated harmony with ease, and invariable winner of the scale running Marathon. Especially expert in breaking bronco Pegasuses to lady's saddle, and most daring steeplechaser in the clouds. Of a free and independent nature, but over-sympathetic. Believed to have been the original ancestress of Portia, having shown great talent as a special pleader in bad causes. Private secretary and confidential adviser to Wotan in domestic complications. Special representative of the Crown at the celebrated Hunding-Siegmund fight, with private instructions to break into the ring at the last moment in favor of Siegmund. Owing to interference of his stepmother, the Goddess Fricka, was recalled and instructions countermanded. Joined the insurgents temporarily, and warned Siegmund that he had been elected to the ranks of Past Performers, with honorary membership in the Down and Out Club. By this act incurred the displeasure of the Administration, and after a trial

before the Supreme Court was deprived of all privileges of the Valhalla Woman's Club, and sentenced to one hundred years of road work in the role of Rip Van Winkle, in an open air stadium on the summit of Walkurenfels, under an asbestos guard, in charge of Loge, fire chief of Valhalla. Engagement a complete success. Returned to further activities in her favorite role in unimpaired strength, and showing no change in appearance save substitution of blond wig for former raven tresses. Celebrated return by marrying Siegfried, her stepnephew, who arrived at the stadium in time to witness the last series of positively farewell performances of Rip Van Winkle the Sleeping Beauty, and who, though several thousand years younger than the star, fell in love with her at first sight. Made Siegfried wedding present of favorite horse Grane, named after a popular equine breakfast food of the period, receiving in return the famous Ring, which the groom had wrested with the remaining balance of the Rhinegold from Fafner. On waning of the honeymoon remained at home on Mt. Gladsheim while Siegfried set forth in search of supplies for summer, and to lay in the winter's coal. Siegfried, having under the influences of spring vintages brewed by Gutrune committed bigamy by wedding the latter, Brunhilde, wedded now by duplicity to Gunther, brother to Gutrune, and deprived of her wedding ring by treachery, returned with new husband to his palace on the Rhine in capacity of sister-in-law to her own husband. On the death of Siegfried regained possession of the Ring, leaving same in her will to Woglinde and her Rhine Maiden sisters. Died of spontaneous combustion on the funeral pyre of Siegfried, simultaneously with the overthrow of the Wotan Administra-Recreations, horseback riding and direction of New Woman's Movement of Valhalla. Address, Valkyrie Riding School, and Aerial Equestrienne Academy, Walsekill-on-the-Rhine.



THE SILENCES OF THE SOUL

By John D. Barry

HERE was a man who loved a woman.

And the woman loved the man.
Their love seemed to them infinite,
eternal. They felt sure they would
always be happy together.

And they were wonderfully happy.

The woman joyously busied herself about her domestic affairs till her husband came in the evening. The man worked intently at his task, looking forward to the end of the day when he should return to his home and to her.

They would sit together beside the lamp, she with her sewing, he with a

book and a pipe.

There were long periods of silence between them, of beautiful silence. Their happiness seemed to vibrate in the air.

The woman's head would be bent over her sewing. The man would smoke and smoke.

II

After a time the woman began to ask questions.

First she asked if he was happy.

He looked a little surprised, and smiled good-humoredly. He took his pipe out of his mouth to say that he was very happy.

Then she asked if he had ever been so

happy before.

There was an almost imperceptible frown on his face. But she saw it.

He replied that he had never been so

happy before.

His tone showed that he was puzzled. For a long time she sewed. Somehow the vibrations of happiness were not quite so distinct. In a few moments the man rose and started to leave the room. He said he was tired.

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The woman sat alone. She sewed and sewed.

III

THE next night, as they sat together, the man let his book rest in his lap. He went on smoking.

The woman looked up quickly and said: "What are you thinking of?"

Very deliberately he took the pipe out of his mouth. "I'm thinking of you, dear."

The answer pleased her. She dropped

her head over her sewing again.

Whenever he stopped reading she would look up and say with a smile: "A penny for your thoughts."

She saw that the question made him slightly uncomfortable. She wondered

why.

Sometimes he would answer directly. At other times he would say: "I'm not thinking of anything."

For a long interval he kept his eyes on the book. And yet she noticed that he

did not turn the pages.

She was tempted to tell him, as a joke, that he was not turning the pages. But she didn't.

She felt ill at ease. The silence was dis-

agreeable.

She could not feel the vibrations of happiness till she listened intently.

It was comforting to find they were

there.

He looked up and caught her eye. "A penny for your thoughts," she said.

IV

HE grew to loathe that expression, "A penny for your thoughts." It destroyed his unconsciousness. It made

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him feel almost painfully self-conscious.

He wished that she would stop using the expression. But he didn't like to ask her. It would seem foolish. Often as they sat together he could feel her eyes fixed upon him.

And she would notice that for long intervals he did not turn the pages.

So she began to ask more questions, to divert him, as she assured herself. He was too tired to read after his work of the day. It would be pleasanter for him to talk.

Her questions were about himself and his concerns, about the details of his life before she knew him, about his family, his friends, his former sweethearts, about his feelings.

He saw that she had a passionate curi-

osity about his feelings.

After a long, long time, he saw that her curiosity made her long to probe into the inner recesses of his being, into the very depths of his consciousness, into the sacred places, where he hardly dared intrude himself, the Silences of His Soul.

The discovery filled him with dismay, though he could hardly have explained

why.

V

ONE evening she was very gay. She tore the book from his hand, laughing like a playful child. She declared she should have him all to herself for once. He should not read another word. They were going to have a nice long chat.

He yielded good-humoredly. She sat on a footstool beside him, resting her head against his knee. "I love cud-

dling," she said.

Then she asked: "When was the very first moment you knew you cared for

me?"

He put down his pipe. He could never answer a question like that with his pipe in his mouth. He tried to look back and discover precisely the moment when he had first cared. "I think it was the moment," he said, "when our fingers touched, the night we were walking away from your aunt's house." She clapped her hands and laughed merrily. "Oh, I remember that moment!" she exclaimed.

Then she asked more questions. She drew nearer and nearer the Silences of

His Soul.

The questions became harder and harder for him to answer. They were so personal, so intimate, they dealt with feelings so delicate it seemed as if the mere breath upon them would be a desecration.

And as she went on he had a strange feeling. It was as if they had exchanged places, as if she were the strong one and he were the weak, and as if she were degrading him.

And he felt for her the repulsion that the woman feels for such a man. He could hardly keep from showing it in his

evasive replies.

She knew that she was not pleasing him. Yet she went on. She knew it would be best for her to desist. Yet she went on.

At last, with an expression of impatience, very like anger, he said: "Now I really must get at this book."

She saw that his face was flushed and his eyes were wonderfully bright.

She rose from her seat and took up her sewing. She would go on the next evening.

VI

But the next evening she met difficulties. For some reason she could not understand, it was impossible for her to take that little stool at his feet and to rest her head on his knee. And it was hard to go on while they sat opposite each other. Besides, he seemed absorbed in this particular book on some deep subject.

She made occasional efforts, however, usually in the form of joking references

to his absorption.

And then he saw that she was like a child determined to tear her doll to pieces to find out what was inside.

But she was a child with the will of a

woman.

And what she longed to tear was made of his tenderest sensibilities, hidden in the Silences of His Soul. There were moments when he almost detested her.

There were other moments when he felt pity.

There were still other moments when he was afraid.

VII

Gradually, as they sat together in the evenings, she felt doors closing in her face, quietly, inexorably.

She went on sewing, drawing the

thread with nervous rapidity.

He didn't seem to notice. He smoked

on and read.

Steadily he turned the pages. She wondered why those intervals had ceased when he did not turn pages.

Not once did he give her a chance to say, "A penny for your thoughts."

The vibrations of happiness ceased. In their place she could feel vibrations of pain.

He didn't seem to feel anything.

VIII

One night she made a mighty effort. He felt her will pitted against his. She asked searching questions, leading into the Silences of His Soul.

She knew that there she should find his real being. If she could only enter and possess herself of him, he would be

hers forever!

He steeled himself against her, adroitly parrying her questions.

Then he realized that she was a

Then he realized that she was a stranger. She had always been a stranger. She must always be a stranger.

Between her questions there were long intervals when she seemed to gather

breath and strength.

With every question he seemed to grow more imperturbable. Sometimes he would not reply till long after she had spoken. His replies would be brief, absent.

At last she could not endure the tension. She broke into angry words. Her voice grew higher and higher till it was almost a scream.

"You don't tell me anything any more. You sit here beside me every evening, and yet you are millions of miles away."

He put down his book and drew his pipe from his mouth. The pipe he placed carefully on the table.

"What do you want me to do?" he

asked

The question infuriated her. How could she express the agony in her mind?

She dashed out of the room in a passion of tears.

He sat and stared after her. He did not touch his book or his pipe.

He said nothing.

But there was a fearful tumult in the Silences of His Soul.



"PA, what is the submerged tenth?"
"An improper fraction, my son."



STRETCHING the imagination won't make both ends meet.



IF you would have the world take you at your own valuation, don't give yourself away.

THE ONLY GIRL I EVER LOVED

By Terrell Love Holliday

ah, what a lass she was!"
mused Wilkins, pushing deeper
into the cushioned club chair.

"Wasn't she, though!" echoed Carson. "A paragon of loveliness, the embodiment of all the virtues!"

"What implicit faith I had in her!"

continued the first speaker.

"If she'd told you the golden aureole that crowned her queenly head was all her own, you'd have believed it, even though pompadours were a foot high then," chuckled Carson.

"Worse," admitted Wilkins sheepishly. "She was a widow of thirty, and swore she'd never really loved before.

I didn't doubt it."

"Nor call her mercenary when you begged her to elope with you and she asked you if you had carfare?" ventured Carson.

"Certainly not," answered Wilkins.
"Then I went to college, and it was two years before I saw the Only Girl again. She had changed from a statuesque blonde to a petite brunette. I loved her still, but—"

"You couldn't help noticing that she had a mole on her neck?" grinned Carson, from the wisdom of much experi-

ence.

"Umhuh," said Wilkins. "She talked through her nose. The next time I met the Girl—eighteen months later—she was a Titian-haired maid of twenty-two.

She gave me her first kiss."

"And when her most recent ex-beau remarked to you that she had an affectionate disposition, you didn't knock him down, as you would very likely have done in your pre-adolescent days?"

"No. I simply felt that my confidence in the sex was forever destroyed. I made then my first cynical speech about women."

"In the ensuing fifteen years or so you've met the Girl with decreasing frequency; and from each meeting you've recovered a little more quickly?" quizzed Carson.

"True."

"Every time you met her," proceeded Carson, "her defects were graver and more readily apparent?"

"You're a mind reader," ejaculated

Wilkins.

"On two or three occasions, when her faults seemed the least serious, you decided to overlook them. Then—she said she had never dreamed that you cared that way, and asked you to meet her fiancé?"

Wilkins, almost embarrassed as-

sented.

"Once she accepted, and then threw you down—hard?"

"You read the history of my life as if it were your own," acknowledged Wilkins.

"We haven't any copyright on it, old chap; it's the History of Man," condoled Carson.

"Well," affirmed Wilkins, "if I could only feel again as I did that first time I—by Jove, I'd marry her! Wouldn't you?"

"I have already," said Carson, giving the waiter an order for something cheer-

ing.

"To the Only Girl I Ever Loved," proposed Wilkins. "I freely forgive her."

Carson raised his glass. "I'm trying to," he said.

THE CURIOSITY OF KITTY COCHRAINE*

By Miriam Michelson

CHARACTERS

MRS. HAMILTON
MRS. DALTON (her friend)
MISS KITTY COCHRAINE (her cousin and ward)
JOSIAH POMEROY (Quaker governor of the prison)
PERSEVERANCE (his fifteen-year-old daughter)
THADDEUS EARLE (an impecunious artist)
A GAOLER

TIME: About 1790.

PLACE: New York—a debtors' prison.

SCENE—A large, bare Colonial chamber, with an overhanging gallery on the left. EARLE, in prison for debt, sits before an easel near an open barred window to the right, painting languidly. A small door opens noiselessly upon the gallery, and two girls step cautiously in. The one in Quaker gray, with an apron fastened over the shoulders with wide bands, is Perseverance Pomeroy. She is visibly apprehensive; she takes the big key with which she has opened the door and very quietly locks it behind them, and turns appealingly to her companion. But this young person, brave in a celestial blue satin gown with white silk petticoat, is bending eagerly over the banister gazing into the room helow. She is KITTY COCHRAINE, three years older and a full century saucier than her friend. Their conversation is carried on in whispers, EARLE being unconscious of their presence.

PERSEVERANCE

Do let us go back, Kitty. Thee has seen him now. Nothing good can come of staying longer.

KITTY

So that is Earle, the painter! And this is a prison! It does not look like one.

PERSEVERANCE

And would thee have my father pen a gentleman in with rogues and rascals? This room is under prison roof, and that is enough. But come; thee promised to, after just one glimpse of him.

KITTY (teasing)
I thought you said he was handsome.

PERSEVERANCE (stoutly)

He is handsome. When a man is his own laundress and tailor, can he vie with the dandies on the Broadway? Oh, I beseech thee, Kitty, come now!

KITTY (with affected indifference) His eyes are blue, you said?

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PERSEVERANCE

And so they are—of a dancing, sparkling blue that's like the— Kitty, I hear my father's step!

KITTY (listening)

You hear the guard pacing to and fro, little coward.

PERSEVERANCE

But if my father chance to come! And he does make the rounds at times himself—not often, but at times.

KITTY

I catch no glitter of gold in his hair, and, I confess, to me it seems more tangled than curly.

PERSEVERANCE

My conscience! Look there where the sunshine touches it. Even gold is dull in the dark. Will thee not come now?

KITTY

Will thee not stay a little, thou quaking Quaker? What harm in peeping at a handsome painter?

Perseverance

Peeping? That were as well done from outside.

KITTY

With the guard to see and snigger over a girl's curiosity? No. 'It does not become Mistress Kitty Cochraine to furnish food for loutish laughter'—I quote my cousin by marriage, His Little Wondership, Alexander Hamilton.

Perseverance

And Mr. Alexander Hamilton could but ejaculate—

Kitty

If he knew—if he knew, Perseverance. But he doesn't.

PERSEVERANCE

But should my father discover us, he would know. (*Imploringly*) I pray thee, Kitty. It is not prudent.

KITTY (merrily)

Have no fear for me, dear Perseverance. I need but say if I am caught: "'Twas my devotion to that madcap Perseverance; I went with her merely that I might save her reputation."

PERSEVERANCE

Kitty!

KITTY

Hush!

EARLE (below, putting down his brush, stretching himself and singing)

There's naught but care on ev'ry hand. In ev'ry hour that passes-o. What signifies the life of man An' 'twere na for the lasses-o?

KITTY

Of a truth, the man has a pretty singing voice. (To Perseverance in a whisper) I wonder if his spoken words be half as musical?

EARLE (singing)

Auld Nature swears the lovely dears Her noblest work she classes-o. Her 'prentice hand she tried on man, And then she made the lasses-o.

(Yawning) Oh-h!

Kitty (mimicking him under her breath)
Oh—h!

Perseverance

Mistress Kitty Cochraine, I have ever believed thee proper and maidenly. I vow I'll stay no longer; if it pleases thee to remain, rest assured thee'll remain alone. For me— (She turns indignantly to go.)

KITTY (putting an arm about her)
For you— Perseverance, shall I tell
you a secret?

Perseverance (eagerly)

I'll vow never to betray it—never. Verily, Kitty, thee may repose the fullest confidence in me. Ere any person shall know it from me—ah, tell me, Kitty!

KITTY

Well—I like him, Perseverance.

Perseverance

Kittyl

Kitty

I know well about the blue in his eye, the gold and the curl in his hair. In truth, I knew— Perseverance, you will never tell?

PERSEVERANCE

Nothing under heaven shall wring it from me.

KITTY

I knew it all a fortnight since when I saw him in my cousin's drawing room, where he'd been summoned to paint Betsy Hamilton's picture.

PERSEVERANCE

And what did he say to thee? Tell me—tell me, Kitty.

KITTY

Nothing. Not one word. Betsy bundled me out of the room before he even knew I was there. I made up my mind to outwit her a second time, but before the second sitting came he had been arrested for debt. Perseverance, to imprison a gentleman for debt! (Her voice rises.) Out upon such injustice! If half the members of our Congress—if the wonderful Alexander himself—

PERSEVERANCE Hush! Kitty, he hears.

(EARLE has looked up and started to his feet. Both girls crouch quickly down upon the landing, and in her hasts the big key Perseverance has been holding falls from her hand and clangs upon the floor at the artist's feet.)

EARLE (picking it up)

A key! A key to what and from where? To some banker's vault? A most appropriate gift to a debtor! But it was a woman's voice, I'll swear. (Aloud, looking up) Ah, merciful lady, deign to look down upon one whose afflictions may well touch a tender heart!

(Silence ensues. On the narrow gallery landing KITTY and Perseverance clutch each other tightly. From one comes a smothered giggle, from the other a subdued sniffle.)

EARLE (aside)

The tender heart when touched yields peculiar results. (He hurries to the extreme opposite side, whence he can see a knot of ribbons waving agitatedly above the gallery banister.) Ah, madam (Suppressing a chuckle), be not so void of all humanity as to deny your servant one glimpse of his benefactress.

(Silence.)

EARLR

May an humble artist not know even the name of her who has placed him under everlasting obligation? (Silence.)

EARLE (aloud but in pretended soliloguy, his eye still upon the ribbons)

She is gone. Cruel, not to stay for one word of gratitude! I must at least touch the spot her foot has pressed. (He crosses and prepares to mount the narrow staircase.)

Perseverance (gasping)

Kitty, he's coming! Oh, what shall we do? Did I really lock the door? (She tries it, but in vain.) I feared someone might try it by chance and find us here.

KITTY (rising and waving EARLE back)
Sir—sir, I protest; sir, I—

EARLE (stopping at the turn of the stairs)
By heaven, it's she they call "Peerless
Kitty Cochraine"!

KITTY

Sir!

EARLE (aside)

Slowly, Thaddeus! Your luck has turned your head. (Aloud) Your pardon, madam; for just a moment I mistook you for that saucy belle the town's gone mad about. There is in you something that reminds one of Miss Cochraine, but—

KITTY

But what?

Perseverance (whis pering and pulling KITTY's skirt)

Oh, Kitty, will thee not ask him for the key?

EARLE

But, with your permission, madam, the cousin of Alexander Hamilton has far too much of the haughty air of her aristocratic relative.

KITTY

Indeed!

Perseverance (in a whisper)
I pray thee, Kitty, the key! My
father—

EARLE
Truly, it ill becomes a woman, that

imperious air which lends dignity to the little Lion. I have often thought—

KITTY (leaning down toward him)
Of her?

That if, by some miracle, I were chosen to paint the beauty's portrait, I'd inform that lovely face of hers with some such mild and gently beaming graciousness as illumines the countenance even now shining down upon an unworthy and unfortunate artist whowho begs a thousand pardons for his presumption.

KITTY

Sir, you do presume. You presume, sir!

Perseverance (whispering)
Kitty, Kitty, should thee anger him,
he'll never give up the key.

EARLE

Ah, madam, be not so cruel as to deny me forgiveness. It is the privilege of generosity to pardon overthankfulness. I who owe to you this gage of kindness— (He holds up the key.)

KITTY

Sir, you owe me nothing. It's a mistake. (Aside pettishly) 1 should esteem it a particular favor, Perseverance, if you would cease twitching my petticoat!

PERSEVERANCE

The key!

EARLE

'Twas ever the gracious part of charity to belittle its office. This precious key—

KITTY (stamping her foot)
Sir, I know nothing of any key. 'Tis
utter fatuousness, the coxcomb vanity
of man to suppose that—that I know
aught of any key.

Earle (throwing the key down on the table and turning to her with affected hauteur)

To what am I indebted then, madam, for the honor of this visit?

KITTY

To what? (She opens her lips indignantly, then turns her back upon him and frantically tries the locked door.) EARLE (grinning, but in a most respectful tone)

Is it possible that my modest fame as a portrait painter has brought a patron to this place?

Perseverance (whispering)

A lady might come to have her portrait painted, even to the prison, Kitty. Ah, me, I dare not face my father! And how ever shall we get out without that key? If thee'll but descend, just for a moment, it might well be. No one can resist thee, Kitty, dear Kitty!

KITTY

Fie, fie, Perseverance Pomeroy! No, someone will come and let us out.

Perseverance

But no one comes by way of the gallery door. None but my father knows there is a key. (She weeps.)

KITTY (desperately, aloud to EARLE)

Sir, I—I did in fact come to speak with you about a portrait. Yet had I dreamed a lady's presence could be so misconstrued, I had never set foot within this squalid studio of yours.

EARLE (aside)

Oh, Thad, Thad, you lucky beggar! (Aloud) It is all an error on my part, gracious lady, for which I most humbly beseech forgiveness. Oh, would you but picture to yourself this squalid studio of mine and the hopeless heart it heldno hope within, no hope without—you'd surely forgive me! Put yourself for a fleeting second in the place of him who has offended you. See, you cannot paint, your hand is heavy and your brush is dumb; for all you can see or feel is wallenclosed misery, shutting in an artist from the sun and air and freedom that's his very life, and the labyrinthian maze of 'prisonment for debt that but leads a debtor to his bitter starting point! Then, as if from heaven itself, drops a key, and as if from heaven itself comes a voice of such sweetness, a face of such beauty! Ah, madam, give me that face to paint, and were this even the key of my dull prison, as I thought it was, I'd exchange it gladly for the inspiration of such a subject!

Perseverance (whispering) There, Kitty, there!

KITTY (mollified but at a loss how to proceed)

What—what are your terms, sir, may I ask?

EARLE

For full length? For bust? Oh, if it be not too bold, and could I have my way, I'd paint you, madam, as I saw you first, looking down divinely conscious of the world beneath, yet divinely apart from all that's sorrowful in it. It may be— I have some sketches—poses I might show. It may be, if you would descend-

Perseverance (whispering) Go—go, dearest Kitty—go!

KITTY (whispering) Not a step, Perseverance, without you. It would not be proper.

Perseverance Me? Never! What would my father say? I will not go.

KITTY

Oh, yes, you will. We must say I'm married, and that you- Come, leave it all to me. (With her hand on PERSE-VERANCE'S wrist, she half drags, half coaxes her down the stairs. Aloud to EARLE) My maid, sir, a stupid girl (PERSEVERANCE stops, indignant) but honest, if a bit lackwitted. Come, child. If there were anything with which she might amuse herself— (She picks up the key from the table.) Ah, this quaint old key! 'Twill please her mightily. A magpie passion has the child for keys. At home I dare not leave one about for fear she'll take and hide it. There, Perseverance, you may keep this till we're ready to go. (Perseverance, key in hand, makes a dart for the stairs. KITTY intercepts her.) No, no, child, not now. You must wait till we have conversed about this portrait, which I mean for a gift to your master, stupid! (She shakes her significantly.)

(Perseverance sits down doggedly at the foot of the stairs. With possession of the key her fears subside, and as KITTY

and EARLE talk she idly looks over the canvases leaning against the wall.)

Kitty (formally)
My husband, Mr.—Mr. Geoffrey, sir - (EARLE looks up quickly, a quizzical light in his eye.) Your pardon, sir; you were about to observe-I protest, is there anything more natural than that a husband should desire a portrait of his wife?

EARLE

Nothing—nothing more natural, when that wife names herself Mrs. Geoffrey.

Kitty

A truce, sir, to compliments. Geoffrey, as I have said, has a fancy for this portrait, and learning of your skill, he recommended that I see and speak with you about it, even-even though the place, this place, is rather irregular.

EARLE (hurrying to her rescue)

I esteem it a most particular favor, madam. The terms you will set yourself after we have decided upon the style. Permit me. (He hands her to a chair. He takes the seat opposite at his easel, and sketches as he talks.) Your husband, ma'am-would he be that Silas Geoffrey who---

KITTY

Silas, that withered money changer! Sir!

EARLE (enjoyingly)

How absurd of me! I should have said his son.

KITTY Elias? No, I thank you.

EARLE There is a Jared Geoffrey.

KITTY A sot—a whiskey-deadened dandy!

EARLE

Or Captain Desmond Geoffrey. (A smothered giggle of enjoyment comes from Perseverance.) But no, that Captain Geoffrey, rumor says, is betrothed to Miss Kitty Cochraine.

Kitty (angrily)

'Tis false.

EARLE

And yet I heard it from one who spoke as though he knew.

KITTY

And I from one whose knowledge must be more trustworthy than even your informant's, sir; from Miss Cochraine herself.

EARLE (eagerly)

Ah, do you know her? Have you spoken to that "Peerless Kitty," the toast of the town, who treads down hearts upon her light-footed way even as a conquering hero walks upon roses?

KITTY (blushing and smiling)
Tut—tut, you exaggerate!

EARLE (passionately)

I know a man who had seen her but once, who had never heard her voice—and she has the meadowlark's own joyous high-pitched lilt—a man who has never touched her hand, and yet—and yet—

KITTY (leaning forward)

And yet?

(EARLE bends toward her. A moment's silence follows.)

PERSEVERANCE

Ohl

KITTY

What is it, child?

(Perseverance comes forward giggling, with a canvas which she lays in Kitty's lap. Kitty takes it up and sees it is a portrait of herself.)

EARLE

And yet he'd die for her!

KITTY

They all say that.

EARLE

And may not even tell her he loves her.

KITTY (lifting the picture between them)
'Tis not bad, not bad at all. Now how— Did she pose for this?

Earle

It's vile—a libel on her loveliness. I

know that now. But 'twas just a glimpse I caught one day at her cousin's house.

(The slamming of a door sounds without.)

KITTY (rising terrified)

My heart, what's that? Persever-

(PERSEVERANCE scampers toward the stairs, but halfway up misses the key, which she has mislaid among the canvases, and comes flying down to seek it. Frantically she looks through them.)

EARLE

Why, it's a very simple thing—dinner.

KITTY

Dinner?

EARLE

Merely dinner. I beseech you, Mrs. Geoffrey, have no fear.

KITTY (hurrying from him)
I must go—I must go. Perseverance!

PERSEVERANCE

Oh, I have lost it! It's gone! Where under heaven can it be? Alas, alas! Where did I lay it?

(There is a noise without.)

KITTY (seizing PERSEVERANCE by the shoulder and shaking her)
Find it, Perseverance, find it!

EARLE

I pray you, madam, have no care for the key. I value it not.

KITTY (beside herself)

You—you value it not? Sir, I do not care to be seen here by every gaping servant.

EARLE

You will be seen by none—by none, I assure you, madam. Stay, I beseech you, yet a little. The sketch I have needs but a few moments more to fix it on the canvas. The gaoler need not enter. Often he but passes the tray to me. If you will only stand silent here. (He hurries to the door. KITTY stands flat against the wall; PERSEVERANCE is groveling on the floor hunting for the key.)

GAOLER (at the door, passing the tray to EARLE)

Ha, Mr. Painter, here's a feast for you today.

EARLE

A feast! I need it not today. Today—today! Ah, man, today's as different from yesterday as though a new sun shone on a new and grateful world!

GAOLER

Yet take it and thank gallant Captain Geoffrey, who dined his lady love last night—well guarded, of course, by Mrs. Hamilton. The remnants of such feasts, the broken victuals, come often to debtors' prisons. (He slams the door shut.)

EARLE (standing, tray in hand)

"The remnants of such feasts, the broken victuals come often to debtors' prisons"! Take that, Thaddeus Earle. "Broken victuals come often to debtors' prisons"! How do you like that for a sauce to your meal, eh? "And thank the gallant Captain Geoffrey, who dined his—" (He hurls the tray from him.) Ay, cut off a man's hand at the wrist and bid him dig his way out of jail! Chain his faculties and urge him then to diligent use of them that he may have them back again! Put out his eyes and tell him that he shall have sight when his vision grows clear! "Broken victuals come often—" Oh—oh—oh! (He throws himself down beside the table, burying his head in his arms.)

KITTY (coming swiftly to him)
Sir—sir, I—I respect you. (With emotion) I esteem you, sir!

EARLE (looking up and refusing her outstretched hand)

No—no, you cannot, for I do not esteem myself. My self-respect is gone, is crushed, degraded; as contemptible as—as that shattered mess yonder that sticks in my throat as though I'd swallowed it! Oh, madam, if you know such a one as I, some butterfly artist who is drifting his way through Bohemia's blue skies, let him be, let him be for his swift sunny minute. His punishment will come. He'll have his broken victuals flung in his face, Mrs. Geoffrey, be sure!

KITTY (with sudden candor)
I am not Mrs. Geoffrey, sir. I have deceived you.

EARLE (listlessly) Ah, no, you have not.

KITTY

You—you knew?

EARLE

Would even that (Pointing to the debris of the tray) be so hard to bear if you were not—you?

KITTY
Sir, I—you—I confess, I—

PERSEVERANCE (pulling aside the sketches, dislodging the key, which falls through a crack in the floor)

It's gone! Kitty—Kitty—the key! Now, verily, it's gone. Ah, me! Ah, me!

KITTY (rushing to her)
Where? Show me, Perseverance!

Perseverance (weeping)
D—down the cr—crack. Oh, 'tis all
thy fault! Thee would not let me go
when I had it safe.

Kitty

My fault? Mine! Who lost it twice, you silly chit? Who let it escape—drop twice betwixt her fingers? Oh, was ever girl more fitly punished for her folly than I?

EARLE (crossing over)
This key, then—

KITTY (miserably)

Is the key of the little door in the rear of the gallery. It was I who persuaded Perseverance—Perseverance—Pomeroy, not my maid—to open it for me, that I—I might—

EARLE

But it may well be that I can pry this plank out and get it for you.

Pomeroy (without)

And in this chamber, where once the Friends did meet, have I lodged my latest guest, one Earle, a debtor painter.

Perseverance (leaping upstairs)
My father's voice!

POMEROY (without)

This way, ladies. A well bred fellow is this beggar artist; he'll receive you with due courtesy. And then you may inspect the chamber at your leisure. Right well I think it will suit thy purpose, Mistress Hamilton.

KITTY (with a quick indrawn breath)
My cousin! Oh, a malediction on her
philanthropy! Why must she visit this,
of all places?

Perseverance

Quick—quick, Kitty! We'll crouch down low on the gallery and they'll never guess we're there.

KITTY

I beg you to recollect, Perseverance, that Kitty Cochraine is not used to skulk and tremble and excuse. Besides, what good in the end? We must get out finally. But how? But how?

Pomeroy (outside)

Unruly lads here confined may be taught a trade, as thee says so well, Mistress Dalton.

Kitty

Mrs. Dalton! The most malicious tongue in town!

Pomeroy (without)

Oh, yes, the place is large enough. I should have shown it to you from above, from the gallery, but it is so long since the key was used it hath been mislaid.

EARLE (to Kitty)

Will you trust me? Will you let me find a way? There is but one. Oh, Miss Cochraine, your generous nature must respond to an opportunity to rehabilitate a man in his own eyes, by accepting the little that he has to give. Let me be of service to you.

KITTY (with downcast eyes)
I came to spy upon you.

EARLE I thank you for it.

KITTY
To gratify a cruel girlish curiosity.

EARLE

I—bless you for it.

KITTY (throwing out her hand to him) Help me, then.

(EARLE seizes her hand and draws her to one side, talking earnestly.)

Pomeroy (without)

Nay, nay, I fear not he'll escape, Mistress Dalton. Perseverance's sitting room opens upon the corridor that separates the small gallery entrance from her door, and there a guard paces to and fro. Yet 'tis merely a precaution. I have his word—aye, his word. This Earle—but thee shall see him.

(While Pomeroy talks, Earle has led Kitty to the landing where the staircase from the gallery turns a few steps from the bottom. There he poses her, and under his direction she assumes a haughty, picturesque attitude, standing looking off toward the entrance door. Perseverance, who has stopped halfway up, half curious, wholly terrified, yields gradually to his coaxing and comes down again, protesting.)

PERSEVERANCE

I cannot. My knees are shaking so. What is it that I must do? Oh, let me go!

EARLE (soothingly)

No, no, you will not desert your friend. You will merely sit near her and—and save her name from gossip, and your own.

PERSEVERANCE

I cannot. How will it help if I am caught, too?

EARLE (placing a chair to the right of the staircase near KITTY and gently com-

pelling Perseverance to be seated)
See, it is such a little thing. Your
friend Miss Cochraine wishes her portrait painted by an unworthy artist—
Earle, the debtor. It is for a surprise to
her cousin Mrs. Hamilton. And as the
mountain may not go to Mahomet, she
comes, Miss Kitty Cochraine comes—a
bit, oh, a very little bit imprudently—
to him; her kind heart and her lovely,
willful head stop not to consider that he
is in prison. But all that fraction of imprudence is null and void because by her
side, as she poses haughtily and he paints
humbly, sits purity personified in a little

Quaker maid whose saintly face is—is bent—over her knitting. (He seizes her ball and needles from Perseverance's pocket and presses them into her hands.) Hoorah!

Perseverance (the needles clicking in her shaking hands)
I cannot. Thee sees I cannot!

KITTY (without altering her pose)
Be brave, dear heart. You—you shall
be my bridesmaid some day for it, Perseverance.

EARLE (under his breath) Aye, and mine.

PERSEVERANCE

I'll try. But thee must not ask me to speak. (Bolts ratile.) Oh, there they come! (Her needles fly.)

KITTY (looking down from PERSEVER-ANCE to EARLE, who has seated himself, his back to the door, at his easel, and is sketching rapidly) Is she not adorable?

EARLE (looking up at KITTY)
Adorable! 'Tis the word of all others.

(KITTY waves her hand and shakes her head forbiddingly.)

EARLE (in a low voice, to her)
Do you know, I used to love to dream that after I had painted Mrs. Hamilton's portrait this—this might come true!
Oh, yes, I know it was impertinent, but an artist's brain is a midsummer night's dream where the wildest fantasies are born and buried only to flower riotously up again. I was mad with hope the day your cousin sent for me. I meant to win success with her portrait, and with yours to win—

(The door is thrown open. Enter Pom-EROY, MRS. HAMULTON and MRS. DAL-TON, this last an inquisitive, spiteful-eyed dame who gasps audibly at the tableau.)

EARLE (to KITTY in a most businesslike tone)

Eyes a little more to the right, madam, if you will be so kind. And chin just—no, that's too much—just a trifle higher. Thank you. I aim to please one who is a severe critic of art, your honored cousin.

POMEROY

This is the apartment, ladies. Friend Earle, Mistress Hamilton and Mistress Dalton crave your permission to inspect this apartment.

EARLE (springing from his chair)
Your pardon, Mr. Pomeroy. Your
servant, ladies. I was so intent upon my
work that I must not have heard you
enter. The lady has but a few moments to give me, as her sittings are a
secret from her cousin, for whose pleasure the portrait is designed. (To KITTY)
I must beg you not to change your pose,
Miss Cochraine.

MRS. HAMILTON (who has just seen who the sitter is)
Cochraine—Kitty!

KITTY (without turning a hairsbreadth, her eyes still looking over Mrs. HAM-ILTON'S head)

Ah, Cousin Betsy, now you've spoiled my surprise! And I did so hope to celebrate your birthday with this gift. Acknowledge, 'tis difficult for a girl to plan her little surprises successfully. Perseverance warned me, when I broached the plan, that your philanthropy might lead you even here.

POMEROV

Perseverance!

(Perseverance's needles click agitatedly. She rises, courtesies and reseats herself without daring to lift her eyes.)

KITTY

Yes, Perseverance knew better than I that enterprise which brings Betsy Hamilton into the unlikeliest places. Or was it (Dropping her pose and walking down to her cousin, about whom she puts her arm coaxingly)—or was it—ah, I see! You came on the selfsame errand that brought me here. 'Twas to sit for your portrait and surprise us, too. Ah, Cousin Betsy, we're quits.

Mrs. Hamilton
Kitty, how could you? How imprudent! I am displeased.

KITTY (innocently)
With Perseverance here to chaperon?

Was I wrong? Perhaps I was, but who, looking at Perseverance there, could think a thought that was not innocent? (Aside, turning away with Mrs. HAMLTON) Forgive me, cousin. I'll never offend again; but let not Mrs. Dalton see your displeasure.

POMEROY

Perseverance!

Perseverance (knitting furiously) Ye—es, father.

Pomeroy
How came thee here, Perseverance?

PERSEVERANCE

With—with Kitty, father. (She casts an imploring glance at KITTY, who is talking cajolingly to MRS. HAMILTON; then turns in despair toward EARLE, who has been overwhelming MRS. DALTON with attentions.)

EARLE (stepping between them)

I want to ask you, Mr. Pomeroy, to permit me to paint Miss Pomeroy's portrait, just as she sits there knitting, with her serious childish face a picture of purity and industry. Not now (As Pomeroy is about to speak) but when I've left your hospitality behind and can think of it with no bitterness, with only gratitude for the consideration that graced it.

Pomeroy

That time will not be long in coming, my lad. When thy creditors hear that Mistress Hamilton is thy patroness, that she is sitting to thee, thee'll ride securely out of bondage into fame and fortune. Good luck go with thee.

MRS. DALTON

But is it—can it be possible, Mrs. Hamilton, that you will sit for your portrait in a debtor's prison?

Mrs. Hamilton (tartly)

You have heard what my cousin observed, Mrs. Dalton. I have sat but once, and then in my own home; yet if Mr. Earle is not too much occupied with

Miss Cochraine's portrait—the light is good; the place is quiet, it appears to me—or, better, if you will yield to me, Kitty, Mr. Earle shall paint my portrait here and paint himself out of gaol.

KITTY

But, Betsy-

MRS. HAMILTON (aside, in a swift whisper to KITTY)

Hush—hush! By the time the rumor spreads over the town that you've been here—and she'll surely spread it—I'll have my portrait on exhibition to confound the gossips and make them believe they heard only half aright. (Aloud) Afterward you shall have your portrait done, Kitty. It would be more befitting a young girl to sit to a painter in a more conventional studio. I can during sittings familiarize myself with the place and its suitability for the use to which we purpose putting it, Mrs. Dalton. We need not therefore linger longer today.

EARLE (to Mrs. Hamilton)
Ah, madam, I am poor indeed, lacking
words to thank you with. Believe me, I
owe you more than I can ever pay.

MRS. HAMILTON

You owe me nothing. Let the portrait please my husband and it is I will be your debtor. I bid you good day, sir. (They all bow and go out, KITTY dropping a glove as she leaves. A moment later she reappears in the doorway, panting, hurried, but smiling upon him.)

EARLE

Miss Cochraine—Kittyl (He picks her glove from the floor and drops on his knee to hand it to her.)

KITTY (giving him both hands) Courage!

(He lifts her hands to his lips. She hurries away.)

EARLE (standing looking after her)
And then she made the lasses-of

CURTAIN

LE MAÎTRE

Par Marc Donat

*ERDINAND BOUSSETARD qui vivait chichement des 250 francs par mois que lui octroyait, dans une administration, la munificence de l'Etat, consacrait tous ses dimanches à

une promenade champêtre.

Parisien de pure race, c'est-à-dire adorant la campagne, il ne la comprenait guère que dans la banlieue, estimant qu'un arbre est le même à Tahiti et à Viroflay et que certains paysages de Seine valent ceux que l'on irait chercher au bord de ces grands fleuves inconnus qui baignent des contrées incertaines.

Donc, le dimanche matin, dès 7 heures, quelque temps qu'il fit, Boussetard, lavé, rasé de frais, astiqué et le sourire aux lèvres, quittait sa sombre demeure, rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau, pour gagner une gare quelconque. C'était un philosophe, par conséquent un égoïste. Il vivait seul, avec délices, ne voyant dans la société d'autrui que des obstacles à ses propres plaisirs: "Si j'étais marié, pensait-il le dimanche matin, ma femme ne serait jamais prête à l'heure et craindrait de compromettre son teint au bon soleil." Il refusait également la compagnie de ses collègues, déclinait toutes les invitations et s'en allait, joyeux et solitaire, selon sa fantaisie, musant, suivant le bout de son nez, mangeant où il lui plaisait et ce qu'il lui plaisait et satisfaisant ses goûts bucoliques au plus juste prix.

Pourtant, ce dimanche-là, il faillit remonter chez lui, tant la chaleur était suffocante. La rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau brûlait, à 7 heures, sous un ardent soleil de juillet. Ferdinand songea que, ses volets fermés, un broc d'orangeade glacée à portée de sa main, il lui serait agréable de poursuivre la lecture d'un roman policier qu'il avait interrompu à l'endroit le plus palpitant, celui où l'on commence à découvrir que l'assassin du vieux banquier francfortois n'est autre que le président de la République! Mais il eut la vision d'une guinguette égayée par des fleurs; il prit son courage à deux mains, et, frôlant les boutiques pour avoir un peu d'ombre, gagna le métro.

Une de ses manies favorites consistait à se rendre dans un endroit dont le nom lui plaisait. Il vit, au-dessus d'un guichet, parmi des noms trop sourds ou trop retentissants, celui de Bannelorge qui lui plut. Le train partait à 8 h. 30; à 10 heures Ferdinand était arrivé. Il vit une gare minuscule, en face une cabane chétive et demanda à l'employé qui prenait son billet: "Est-ce que Bannelorge est loin d'ici?" L'employé répondit: "Vous y êtes!" avec un sourire. C'était une station. Le train, déjà reparti, n'était plus qu'un point à l'horizon. . . . Boussetard regarda le ciel implacable en soupirant et commença de cheminer le long d'une désolante grand'route. Car il y a grand'route et grand'route; il y a la grand'route plate, unie, bordée de beaux arbres et où marcher est un plaisir; il y a aussi la grand'route qui monte sournoisement, abonde en silex qui blessent les pieds et que bordent de jeunes peupliers étiques et poussiéreux. Telle était celle où Ferdinand fut contraint de s'engager. Personne pour le renseigner, d'ailleurs il détestait demander son chemin aux passants et préférait se fier à l'aventure.

Au bout de deux kilomètres il s'arrêta. épuisé. Tout se taisait; non seulement les hommes, craignant la canicule étaient restés chez eux, mais les insectes ne bourdonnaient point: c'était un silence impressionnant sous le braisillement d'un ciel d'azur et de flamme. "Je vais attraper une congestion," pensa Ferdinand. En même temps il arrivait devant la grille d'un magnifique château, louer," indiquait un écriteau délavé par les pluies et roussi par le soleil. Ferdinand regarda à travers les barreaux de la grille et vit un parc délicieusement ombragé où devait régner la plus enviable. la plus délicieuse fraîcheur. Homme de ressources, il n'hésita point. Parfois surpris sans parapluie par l'averse, il avait visité dans Paris les appartements à louer. Il n'y avait qu'à en faire autant ici. La côte était rude, il puiserait des forces pour la monter. Il épousseta donc ses souliers, ferma son gilet et sortit ses gants de sa poche afin d'avoir l'air d'un monsieur qui pourrait fort bien se payer le luxe d'un château de 50,000 francs.

Il sonna et fut étonné du timbre grêle et comme fêlé de cette sonnette à la manière antique. Presque aussitôt une vieille bonne femme venait lui ouvrir. Comme il s'expliquait:

—Je suis sourde, lui dit-elle, et je n'ai pas mon ardoise. Asseyez-vous sur ce banc et espérez, mon homme est à la mairie et ne va pas tarder à rentrer.

Là-dessus elle s'éloigna et Boussetard s'assit—avec quel soupir de satisfaction!

Au bout d'un quart d'heure, la grille s'ouvrit et le gardien se présenta, un vieux tout rabougri, tout tremblant, qui marchait en se traînant, appuyé sur une canne, et qui offrit à Boussetard le spectacle d'un visage centenaire envahi de poils blancs, durs et brillants. Au milieu de ces poils, la bouche du vieux s'ouvrit, ses yeux s'écarquillèrent. Il faillit s'écrouler de surprise, lâcha sa canne et tomba dans les bras du visiteur sans lui laisser le temps de s'expliquer.

—Mon maître, s'écria-t-il, pleurant et riant, mon bon maître! Enfin c'est vous! Ah! bon Dieu, je ne mourrai pas avant de vous avoir revu! Je savais bien que vous reviendriez de vos Amériques! De-

puis dix-huit ans! Je me faisais vieux! Doux Seigneur! Vous pouvez dire que vous avez forci et belli! Mais je vous aurai reconnu entre mille!

—Vous vous trompez, mon brave homme, rectifia Ferdinand. Je me nomme Boussetard, et je viens pour louer.

Mais le vieux haussa les épaules! Son bon maître voulait encore lui faire une farce, comme au temps de sa jeunesse. Ça ne prenait pas. Il le reconnaissait parfaitement, non pour être Boussetard, comme il l'affirmait, histoire de rire, mais Armand du Valcroisey, dernier héritier de ce nom, parti dix-huit ans auparavant pour les Amériques en laissant à son serviteur une forte somme d'argent pour l'entretien du château, avec mission de le louer si cela lui plaisait:

—Seulement, expliqua le garde, il ne s'est jamais présenté personne; ça ne fait rien; on élève de la volaille; on vend la récolte et la propriété couvre ses frais! Vous retrouverez toutes les choses en état, parce que j'étais sûr que vous reviendriez sans crier gare! Vingt dieux!

Ce que ie suis content!

A vrai dire, le bonhomme était légerement gâteux. Ferdinand essaya en vain de le détromper; il ne réussit qu'à se faire entraîner dans le château qui était immense et confortable. Mélanie, femme du garde, Jean-Baptiste, ne tarda pas, pressée par son époux, à reconnaître, de son côté, son bon maître, auquel elle demanda la permission d'infliger un "Après le déjeuner, je baiser mouillé. filerai sans tambour ni trompette!" Et il absorba, servi pensa Ferdinand. avec mille attentions pieuses et attendries, un repas si délicieux qu'il perdit ses derniers scrupules.

—Je viendrai du samedi au lundi, déclara-t-il. Pour l'argent, je vous défends de m'en ouvrir la bouche, vous m'entendez. J'ai pris ces habitudes en

Amérique.

Il y a des années de cela. Depuis, Boussetard joue, une fois par semaine, au gentleman-farmer. Le samedi soir, il s'étend volontiers sur un rocking-chair et il adresse cette prière à Jean-Baptiste:

—Mon vieux, raconte-moi donc mes souvenirs d'enfance!

PLAY PLOTS AND PAY PLOTS'

By George Jean Nathan

THE critical acupunctures of that inwardly most sagacious of modern day drama analysts, Mr. George Bernaid Shaw, who in this enlightened land is appraised primarily as "that fella who goes to bed in his socks," have rarely drawn blood more cleanly than when directed into the plot tissue of the current popular play. Says he, in part:

The formula for the well made play is so easy that I give it for the benefit of any reader who feels tempted to try his hand at making the fortune that awaits all successful manufacturers in this line. First, you "have an idea" for a dramatic situation. If it strikes you as a splendidly original idea, whilst it is in fact as old as the hills, so much the better. For instance, the situation of an innocent person convicted by circumstances of a crime may always be de-pended on. If the person is a woman, she must be convicted of adultery. If a young officer, he must be convicted of selling information to the enemy, though it is really a fascinating female spy who has ensuared him and stolen the in-criminating document. If the innocent wife, banished from her home, suffers agonies through her separation from her children, and, when one of them is dying, disguises herself as a nurse and attends it through its dying convulsion until the doctor (who should be a serio-comic character, and if possible a faithful old admirer of the lady's) simultaneously announces the recovery of the child and the discovery of the wife's innocence, the success of the play may be regarded as assured if the writer has any sort of knack for his work.

The constitutional legitimacy and organic authenticity of this viewpoint is, of course, laughed out of court by William Archer and his little schoolboys, and is dismissed with a grandiose grunt as being merely a droll display of smartaleckish facetiæ by excessively literary dramatic critics (as the phrase is) who

believe that nothing written of the drama can be accurate and true if it makes one smile, and who name Lafcadio Hearn the "Cincinnati newspaper mucker" for having declared it to be his belief that the language of scholarship would have to be thrown away for purposes of critical creative art. "I think," was his observation, "that a time must come when the scholar will not be ashamed to write in the language of the common people, to make it the vehicle of his best and strongest thought to enter into competition with artists who would now be classed as uneducated, perhaps even vulgar, men."

Patently, the stumbling block that we, in our digression, encounter here is the phrase "common people." In America, who are they-what are they? And what is their language? Patently, too, is there another stumbling block in the word "scholar"—at least so far as the question of dramatic criticism is concerned. Permit me to remove the blocks. The phrase, "common people," in my estimate, embraces, above all other individuals, such as work in offices for employers who do not; as are undue precisianists in the matter of what they call table manners; as read and believe what they read in newspaper editorials; as have a snobbish and superior prejudice against Italian laborers, garbage haulers, society people, ragtime and men who refrain from marriage because of limited financial resources; as admire the gowns worn by Geraldine Farrar; as express opinions freely and gratuitously in cafés, and as make the mistake of calling every theatrical reviewer a dramatic critic.

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^{*}Written with a bad cold in my head.

As to the species of their language. Allow me to present the class that talks of plays with "heart interest;" that speaks of certain theater audiences as being "unresponsive" when one knows well that theater audiences pay two dollars a head for the express purpose of being responsive; that refers to the United States of America as "the land of the free and the home of the brave;" that talks about "dress suits," "Febyouary," "dramatic technic" and "popular fiction," and that comments frequently and jocosely on the lack of comeliness disclosed in the visage of the King of Spain, on Newport dinners and on the puissant elocution of the onion. In brief and in general, the common person may be defined as one who is compelled to cultivate a taste.

Come we to "scholar"—sinister, noisome noun! In matters theatrical let us define this noun as one who does not place a too encompassing trust in the dramatic theories established in the ever changing theater's yesterday; as one who possesses that without which there can be no valid dramatic critic—dramatic instinct (incidentally, a clearly determinable phrase); as one who rebukes the doctrine of Jean Jacques Rousseau that "wisdom consists of servile prejudices;" as one who fears not to write in slang if in that slang there is veined consorting thought; as one who does not offer an imposing and scarefying choral of large words and pompous citations to conceal the absence of practical viewpoint and ideas. The scholar in the channel of dramatic criticism—and being no scholar I may indulge myself in quotation—is the individual who, in Wilde's analysis, occupies the same relation to the work of art that he criticizes as the artist does to the visible world of form and color or the unseen world of passion and thought; who does not even require for the perfection of his art the finest materials—for anything will serve his purpose.

That Mr. G. B. Shaw may have written his strictures of the popular play plot in a spirit of waggery—that he may not believe what he has said—has nothing whatever to do with the case. That is

one of the wonderful things about Shaw. I doubt whether there is another man writing in English today who more often speaks the truth when he believes he isn't. How else, indeed, could be ever have said that critics "become so accustomed to the formula of a play that at last they cannot relish or understand a play that has grown naturally;" that no writer of the first order needs the formula any more than a sound man needs a crutch;" or how else, forsooth, could he ever have impressed us so seriously with "Man and Superman" after sticking out his tongue at himself through A. B. Walkley? It has always perplexed me to decipher the reasons why the majority of older and practised men writing for the native stage—men whose one and only aim seems to be the achievement of self—so frequently fail at so simple a trade. To fail in the attempt to present something dramatically new, something a bit radical (ah, unhappy word!), something intended for the smiles of the mind rather than the guffaws of the mouth, is to fail nobly—and ever has my humble quill been poised in readiness to eulogize the whipped and stoned crusaders of the novitiate. H. S. Sheldon. Tom Barry, Butler Davenport, Arthur Hopkins, Charles Kenyon—to chronicle but a fistful of young knights of the soil who more recently have lowered their unrusty lances at the footlight ogre without popular success-have found sympathy mixed in equal proportion with my ink while the technic yellers and the other wise old boys of criticism were consigning them into the ash pail with space rate flippancy and puns.

The blame for the suppression of latent talent among the young aspiring American playwriters who have real ideas is not to be found in the offices of the managers. Look you, rather, to the so-called critics—not to all of the critics, to be sure, albeit to a sufficiently ample group. For one manager like William A. Brady, for instance, who, whatever his faults, has done more for the young native author in the way of giving him a hearing than any brother producer, you will find a dozen reviewers who, in their criticisms of the work of such novices.

will protest the presentations to be nothing short of public insults. They are aggrieved, hurt, maltreated, affronted and every other synonym in Soule—until the Then out they Sunday supplement. flash with long dissertations on the way the managers are oppressing the "young American playwright." Our reviewing brothers who are ever ready to lend a willing encouragement to the young dramatic idea are as rare individual spectacles as a Christian in Rector's, a pretty girl in a George Cohan chorus or an intelligent lyric to a syncopated tune. That the American common people prefer Bottom the Weaver for their critic and guide only goes to prove once again that Chamfort was no mere interlocutoring Lew Dockstader when he asked: "How many fools does it take to make up a public?"

To return to the analysis presented by Mr. Shaw, let me hazard the concurring and consequently deduced opinion that the one and only way for a young or middle-aged or old American playwriter to succeed in America, to win a popular and remunerative success and to get a majority of what some otherwise eligible souls call "good notices," is never to be guilty of revealing any thought in his work. No play that makes one think can possibly prosper in this naïve land... Which accounts, incidentally, for the great success of the plays of Augustus Thomas and David Belasco. To elaborate upon Mr. Shaw, there are three exceptional ideas for dramatic situations that, if moderately well handled, may always be employed in the American theater to magnificent financial and critical profit. I speak of the situation where a young woman of humble origin and staggering virtue temporarily rejects a millionaire at one stage or another of the wooing process because the suitor does not sufficiently "respect" her. If this rejection is brought about by whispers of scandal concerning the relations of the young woman and the millionaire—see Charles Klein et al.—the play will make a couple of hundred thousands at least; while if the temporary spurning is caused by the alcoholic revels of the millionaire—see George Broadhurst et al.—the

exhibit is sure to be voted the play of the century. I speak of the situation where a sartorially elegant crook utilizes a good woman as his tool, and where the hero preferably from the West-seeing the pure light in the woman's eyes, unhands the villain (who forthwith kills himself) and leads the shrinking, hunted female to the altar. See Armstrong-Mizner et al. And I speak of the situation where a father, "banished from his home, suffers agonies through his separation" from hisdaughter, his sweet, dear, innocent little girl, his "She's-mine-I-tell-youshe's-mine!!" until the daughter reunites him to his wife in the last act. See, most recently, "THE RAINBOW."

This play is an A. E. Thomas edition of "The Music Master," the genre of proscenium exhibit for which an imaginary chorus chants to your ear this prologue: "Here, my lords and masters, is going to be something that will twang tears from your heartstrings. The big scene in the second act has been expressly and carefully manufactured to make you cry, and you will cry, although why you will cry I am sure I cannot say." Mr. Thomas, who promised: to be a considerable and serious factor among our younger writers for the theater, and whose endeavors have been met with no gentler, no more enheartening reviewing pen than mine; has disappointed me with this exposition of extravagantly sentimental sluggerei, of kissyour - dear - old - father, God-bless-your little-heart species of rougesticky pathos. That a large element among the theaterattending populace will be duly affected: by the scenes between the father and daughter it were foolish to contest, inasmuch as such scenes have been duly affecting a large element among the theater-attending populace for the last half-What potency the theme discentury. closed here might have retained has been diminished by numerous faults in the conception of the play. For instance, the separation of father and daughter is brought about through the fear of the mother that the manner of her husband's life and associations may have an effect on the girl—and yet no glimmer of the influence of environment is even insinuated. For instance, the subsidiarily introduced love story of the daughter makes largely negative the preceding dominant love motif of the play. For instance, the father, had he desired to retain his child, might have done so by the simple expedient of utilizing some of his enormous wealth to establish for himself and the girl an abode far from his gay associates. This especially, as he does desert the latter the moment after the girl is taken from him. We observe here a patent artificiality of play logic. To the excellent work of Mr. Henry Miller and little Miss Ruth Chatterton goes my tribute for having laid claim to my attention despite the material with which they had to deal. Prodigal praise of actors has never been one of my pastimes, yet here and now do I wish to act a bit indiscreetly in the instance of Miss Chatterton. Lest my shame be discovered, I shall write my views in a letter intended for her eyes alone. The letter:

My DEAR MISS CHATTERTON:

In this part of our country, where one cannot speak well of another without one's being suspected of being a paid press agent; where one is called upon to consider Miss Elsie Ferguson, for example, as a "star" actress; where so-called "experience" on the stage is deemed arbitrarily to be of more importance than natural acting ability; where youth and youth's talents are ever viewed with doubt by inutile and disap-pointed graybeards; where erudition is translated as being an undeviating adherence to all traditions, many of which are come to be falseit is regarded by theatrical commentators as infra dig. and "not in our set" to praise your type of actress without inserting such makesafe qualifications as "she still lacks a certain assurance," "she falls a bit short in her emo-tional scenes" and "she makes up with beauty what she lacks in technique." The facts that the possession of a supremely final assurance is precisely what militates fundamentally against an actor's power of appeal and dramatic dynamics, that "falling a bit short in the emotional scene" may usually be interpreted as meaning that the performer has conducted herself in the scene in question as a natural woman rather than as a factitious buffel duck, that physical invocation is an imperative requisite in some roles and that "technique" frequently means nothing more than what James K. Hackett and Kathryn Kidder have—these facts apparently are not concerned with the case. Let me, therefore, thus personally say to you that, in this unpretending opinion, you are one of the two best, one of the two most intelligent, and the only secure interpreter of ingenue roles my eyes have witnessed in the later years of the New York theater.

In all sincerity, (Signed) George Jean Nathan.

A beautifully conceived play, a play of vast poetry and-amazing enough in such a case—sense and thought and lucid logic as well, is John Galsworthy's fantastic comedy "THE PIGEON," with which Mr. Winthrop Ames, whose endeavors are deservedly becoming more and more respected as the days go on, opened his new Little Theater. Pleasurably devoid of any of the dear old "structural technic" over the sine qua non of which students of the drama are continually distending their jaws, we discover here a dramatization of the socialism of the soul, of the creed of the universal and complete democracy of the heart that nescious reformers would convert into a despotism of church and law. of the gospel that life is less what we make it than what it is made for us by the lovers of yesterday. We observe the unwinding of this theme through the agency of caged beings on the one sidean artist, an artist's daughter and their friends—and by the wild travelers of the road on the other—a French vagabond, a British cabdriver and a flower seller whose chief offering for sale is not her flowers. We are present as the unfinished Brieux circles of the lives of the landlopers touch the unfinished Brieux circles of law and order; as there is sounded the keynote, "There is in some souls, monsieur, what cannot be made tame;" as human understanding and sympathy are unfolded to be of infinite efficacy over economic understanding and itching reform; and as the circles go on circling on their respective centers for all time to come. Standing out preeminently, we meet the character of Ferrand, wayfarer of a thousand boulevards, with his philosophies and his amours, his weak strength and his strong weakness, admirably interpreted by Frank Reicher. Indeed, the cabotinage in general is remarkably skillful. Galsworthy remains one of the few important dramatists of our day. Just as the mind sometimes actually hums a forgotten tune when the throat is unable to

smind it, so does he actually phrase for our lips the strains of the soul that our hearts have heard, have known and have forgotten amid the discordant melody of life. Love, labor, law each he handles with the rare sense of discriminating judgment displayed by the man who writes an important letter with a view to the immediate mood of its recipient when he shall open that letter rather than with a view to his own mood at the moment of writing, and with the rare sympathy shown by the man who never complains to a waiter because of bad and slovenly service because the man realizes that that is precisely what has made him a waiter.

The best thing about "PRESERVING Mr. PANMURE" is that Pinero wrote it. Otherwise, despite the protestations of such children as believe that a writer who has done so much good work can do nothing that is not good, we here penetrate into a fog-filled, morose and inert farce comedy notable only for two fairly well sketched characters. The narrative scheme of the exposition includes the adventures of a hypocritical member of the English middle class who purloins a labial tidbit from the Cupid's bow of a pretty governess, and who is forthwith beset with grim perplexities to elude detection on the part of his household. The two most important observations made by me in the presence of this piece were, first-that you can always tell that stage characters represent the English middle class when they look, live and act like the American upper class; and second—that had one sat through this two and one-half hours of turmoil and jockeying over a mere kiss without looking at the program, one would have sworn to heaven that the play must certainly be a French adaptation by Gladys Unger.

That I, personally, have never been able to get myself to regard the so-called Yellow Peril with any more seriousness than I bestow upon millionaires' views on Socialism, upon such as discourse long and deep and loud on the beauties and grandeurs and wonders of music and yet themselves can neither sing nor play, or upon people who do not

think Marie Doro is good-looking—that I am not able to work myself up into a frenzy of indignation because the parents of two poor inoffensive little Japanese youngsters who were kept out of school in San Francisco became justly hot under the collar, does not restrain me from setting down the report that not often have I been so curiously impressed in the playhouse as in the sight of Menyhert Lengyel's drama "THE TYPHOON." Staged with extreme good taste, fine intelligence and actual discernment, we are presented in the first two of the three acts of this play with as compelling and as insinuating a shadowgraph of the reaching fingers of Japan as seems possible of conveyance across the footlights. In a hundred and one little ways are we made to feel the deep breathing of Nippon, the scattering of its sons over the world to gain knowledge and information, the imperturbability of the yellow men in the face of white insults and dismissing grimaces—the biding of time and the building up of strength. With the intrinsic dramatic ingredients of the play there may here and there be found childish quarrel, yet in eventual deduction these seemingly impolitic elements must be regarded less as dramatic life movement than symbol movement. Walker Whiteside and his supporting company give the drama a cleanly and cerebral reading. I very heartily recommend this world exhibit to your notice as one of the most ingeniously fancied and ingratiatingly executed representments of several seasons.

Just as the breath of scandal often merely indicates that Mrs. Grundy has been drinking, so does the lavish gloria in excelsis regularly meted out from many quarters to Mrs. Fiske once in a while indicate merely that this actress's intoxicating art of yesterday has robbed her torch bearers of their calm, critical senses. A truly authentic personage of the native theater, an artist of accomplishments and purpose and many a rare and memorable performance, it yet remains that an appreciable inefficiency has crept into her work in the last few years, a dread and deadly mode monotone, a growing and tympanum rending

indistinctness of diction, a languid laissez-faire, a grim and baffling air of thisisn't-good-enough-for-me-so-what's-the use. Even Fra Eaton, staunch Fiske crusader in a hundred bloody bottle battles, in whose ears the vaguest derogation was rabid lèse majesté, has said in faint and trembling whisper that a dégringolade has dawned. "LADY PATRICIA," the piece by Rudolf Besier in which the actress has made her appearance this season, is-save for an occasional nicety of phrase—of absolutely no consequence. Built on the ancient model of parallels, and repetitious and haranguing to the bursting point, this artificial comedy is as bootless, as unsuccessful in effect as the woman who, in seeking a man's sympathy through tears, unwisely hides her leading weapons—her eyes—with her kerchief.

Utilizing one of the aforementioned infallible American plot recipes—the crook so well dressed, as O. Henry once expressed it, that "when he gets through with his clothes he gives them to John Drew," the innocent and virtuous wife and the brave hero who aches to rescue the wife from the sinning mate—Messrs. Armstrong and Mizner are again on the way to make a fortune out of their most recent apotheosis of the underworld, "THE GREYHOUND." Narrating the maneuvers of a coterie of swindlers aboard an ocean liner, the exhibit chains the attention from curtain to curtain by virtue of the fact that it is a perfectly unpretentious effort to enlist the giggle at the expense of logic and the guffaw at the expense of sophistication. The entertainment may best be characterized as melodramatic vaudeville.

"Monsieur Beaucaire," revived by Lewis Waller, takes us back on simurghic wings to the times of parlor romance—the days when men settled arguments with one hand on the steel instead of with one foot on the brass, when women were still looked upon by men as being a race more exalted than themselves and when everybody talked like Richard Le Gallienne and dressed like George Bronson Howard. A pleasant vista of things as they never were; a temporary narcotic from the mess of facts. The Com-

yns Carr version of "OLIVER TWIST," finely acted by a company including Constance Collier, Nat C. Goodwin, Marie Doro and Lyn Harding, retains the Dickens of it in surprisingly capacious measure. On the whole, something very well worth the attention of all theatergoing persons who are able to keep their minds off Eddie Foy for two consecutive hours.

"THE LADY OF DREAMS," Edmond Rostand's verse drama presented by Madame Simone, revolves itself most saliently, in the stolid fact of the present proscenium exposition, into an hysterical and ceaseless eulogium of the eye biffing, ravishing and all-consuming loveliness of an actress who, whatever her other gifts may be, is not even remotely fair. Decry my pragmatical attitude in the teeth of art if you so will; name me lout, bumpkin, dunce, ass if you so feel the whim—and yet may I, like Arachne, be turned into a spider if I have not the courage of my optic nerve to resist the preposterous claims of academic orthodoxy in this pertinent matter of beauty in such a crisis. The most sublime dramatic poetry under heaven's arch must fail to journey into the heart if the visualization of its motif figure—in Rostand's description a woman "the flower of flowers and the star of stars" confronts the eye with a visage of anarchistic prose.

The newest WINTER GARDEN show is a merry and well colored, if ultra bass drum, gallimaufry of syncopated skirts and melodies, devised and assembled for the express purpose of letting the common people see what an easy thing a dramatic critic's job is. To be privileged to sit for nothing right next to the Flowery Way (which runs à la "Sumurûn" from Z to A) and to have to do nothing but puff leisurely at a choice weed passed out by a just too, too hospitable manager, and rest in the imminent possibility and pleasure of having a lovely squab tumble off the Way into your manly lap —and to be paid a princely salary in the bargain for doing it—is the average innocent publican's idea of paradise. Ah, yes, Hugo, virtue and talent have their

rewards!

THE BARDS IN BATTLE ROYAL

By H. L. Mencken

PRING and the poets—ah, well-aday! For two months or more they have been waiting in my antechamber, tuning their lutes and psalteries, piping their vocalizzi, raiding my Scotch and my cigars. A confused and discordant burbling, mercifully damped by the thickness of my oaken portals and the discreet "Sh-h-h-h!" of my com-missionaries and catchpolls. Anon the deep bellow of some maker of epics, all in the bass clef, thunderous, almost seismic. Anon a golden love song for tenor corrupted, perhaps, by adenoids, but yet full of joy. Anon a lullaby, a drinking song, a Christmas carol, a hymn to Columbia or Pan, a ballad in the ancient mode, a madrigal, a barcarolle, the fragment of a mass-polyphony to wring the withers of a Richard Strauss. And to every baritone an alto matched, to every deep-down-diving and mud-upbringing bass a dust-from-the-starsbrushing soprano. A mixed company, of a truth, raiding my bonbons and chewing gum as well as my panatelas and hard liquor. High notes, shrill roulades, B flat, B natural, C-even C sharp; Ossa piled upon Pelion!

Who comes first, when the door is opened ever so little? Walther von der Vogelweide, whiskered to the eyes? Wolfram von Eschenbach? Hans Sachs? John J. Jones? Not one of these—but Miss Clara Mai Howe Fuqua! And thus Miss Clara Mai Howe Fuqua (or is it

Mrs.?):

I love you when you're good,
I love you when you're bad;
I love you when you're gay,
I love you when you're sad.

I love you when you're good, And your goodness makes me glad; I love you when you're bad, But your badness makes me sad.

Well, well, stay your snickers! Not great poetry, perhaps. Maybe not poetry at all. But still honest and harmless stuff. Say what you will against it, you must at least admit that it conveys an intelligible idea intelligibly. No Clara-Mai Howe Fugua Club will have to be organized in the future to debate and determine the meaning of these strains. They are in the good old key of C major -a key avoided and despised by too many of our current minnesingers. What the latter strive for is the baffling quarter-tone, the note that lurks between D sharp and E flat, the unearthly harmonic: And in matter as in manner they lean toward the impalpable, the slippery: One often wonders whether they are up to their armpits in the subconscious or knee deep in stars. Not so Miss (Mrs.?) Clara Mai Howe Fugua. She deals with things as familiar as calf love or sciatica, and she refers to them by their common or stable names. And now and then, as this modest quatrain shows, she comes close enough to grace to be within half a mile of beauty:

Oh, bid my soul stand still each day,
To hear Thy loving voice
Tell how to help the weak grow strong,
The saddened to rejoice.

Hail and farewell! "Two Dozen" is the name of Miss (Mrs.?) Fuqua's book, and the hospitable Badger, of 194 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass., friend to all bards however lowly, is its publisher. Badger is sponsor, too, for Miss Grace L. Slocum, who begins a sonnet thus:

I did but dream that thou didst love me, dear; I am not worthy such.

Which is not the worst, I lament to report, of Miss Slocum's doings, for on one page of her "On the Face of the Waters" she tackles the enterprise, so beloved of poetasters, of rewriting "the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's," with this banal result:

O let me hear thy voice, my love, Thy voice is sweet to me; Thou hast eyes like a brooding dove, None can compare with thee.

Thy lips are like a scarlet thread, With tiny pearls between, Thy soft cheek like pomegranates red, Beneath thy hair's dark sheen.

Turn now to your Old Testament and see what Solomon himself had to say. I quote some of the strophes which obviously suggested Miss Slocum's doggerel:

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead. . . .

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely; thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. . . .

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies. . . .

Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

Imagine the state of mind of a person who turns such luscious, lovely stuff into prim quatrains—quatrains dripping bohea and bichloride! And yet the thing is done constantly. The whole lyric portion of the Old Testament has been reduced time and again to bad verse. There must be at least fifty socalled metrical versions of the Twentythird Psalm-as if the thing itself, as it stands in our English Bible, were not an absolutely flawless piece of rhythm! And there have been fully as many assaults upon the eight canticles of David's son. I turn from Miss Slocum's book to "THE HEART'S CHOICE," by Henry A. Lavely (Sherman-French), and find this preposterous effort to embellish the fifth:

I sleep, but at the least alarm
My heart is all awake,
To catch the faintest sounds of harm
That through its chambers break.

So the pious Lavely. Now the ancient bard:

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

And now another dose of Lavely:

But still my heart is not at rest— A sense of danger near Lurks like a ghostly spectre round, And will not disappear.

What a profanation of beauty! What a mutilation of the greatest love song in all the world! And yet there must be an eager market for such things, for, as I have said, they are produced in large quantity. Solomon himself, piping his lays of amour to his wives and wenches, is too male a figure to be admitted to austere corrugated iron suburban chapels, and so he is bowdlerized and denaturized and his honest heat turned into pale phosphorescence. In this particular case the lady he sings is one who waits impatiently for her lover—and is so badly disappointed when he fails to come to her that she goes down the road calling his name, and is arrested by the "watchmen" and "keepers of the walls" for disturbing the peace. (Cant. V, 6, 7.). But in the Lavely version she becomes an old maid haunted by spooks! A metamorphosis, indeed!

Yet another Sunday school rhapsodist, this time Miss Emily A. Dinwiddie, author of "Songs in the Evening" (Sherman-French). Here is her Revised Version of Psalm xci, 4:

As the bird with drooping wing, Weary with its wandering, Flies homeward to its nest, Weary with the toil of day, And the troubles of the way, I fly to thee for rest.

And here is how David wrote it:

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

As for me, give me David—and Solomon. The only thing that can be said for these long range collaborations is that they are measurably better than the purely original balderdash of the Baraca Class collaborators. Here, for example, is how the saintly Lavely goes it alone:

So you are nine years old today, My own old-fashioned Sue— I note the fact—and only say, Be good and brave and true.

But enough of such rumble-bumblers. Their offense is that of the vandal who turned "Ein Feste Burg" into a polka and scored it for two cornets, an A clarinet and a snaredrum. Closely allied to them are the pious poets of what may be called the God-Help-Us School—poets who see the world as a place of sin and sorrow and look forward to death as to a glad release. For instance, Mrs. Cordie Webb Ingram, author of "SOUTHERN SYMPHONIES" (Broadway Pub. Co.), who prints her portrait as frontispiece to her book and subscribes herself "yours for the enrichment of Southern literature." Thus Mrs. Ingram proceeds to that enrichment:

A vulture is tearing my heart. Prometheus himself never knew

The pangs that are rending the vitals of peace, and piercing my soul through and through.

And thus, in parable:

A fresh-faced girl with a blithesome heart Laughed gaily for a reply, When the solemn voice of the man of God Read the text, "Ye shall surely die."

But ere many weeks since those solemn words, On a bed of affliction and pain, She recalled the warning so gently given And she sighed that she might remain;

That she might atone for her frivolous life, And make some amends for the past, And a sigh of regret passed her pale lips, For she knew that that hour was her last.

More dolorous still is Charles Coke Woods, author of "A HARP OF THE HEART" (Broadway Pub. Co.). Life is frankly a curse to dear old Charlie. He describes himself as "unclothed mid wilds of woe," and as having "lacerated feet that tread on pain," and says that:

From chalices of languid life I drain the bitter lees, And all the music left to me Sobs out from broken keys.

Out, out, O Charles, with your lacerated feet and wilds of woe! Get thee to "The Mikado" or "Huckleberry Finn," and make room for less lugubrious warblers! In particular for Leyland Huckfield, Joyce Kilmer, Margret Holmes

Bates and Sara Teasdale. Pass them in. Mr. Sergeant-at-Arms, and hand them the plate of lettuce sandwiches. Not one of them is a new Keats or Shelley. Not one, perhaps, is even a new Hood or Henley. And yet in the work of each there is an honest striving for beauty, and what is more, a very close approach to it. We have here, in brief, if not soul stirring poetry, then at least a body of sound and graceful verse. Mr. Huckfield goes to the trouble of marking certain of his compositions with a red lead pencil, that I may not overlook them, but the one I like best is not so marked. It is entitled "In Memoriam-E. H.," and is the poet's tribute to his dead mother—an earnest and sonorous piece of writing. with true emotion in every line of it. It is, indeed, so well done that the other things in his "LEGEND OF THE ROSE" (Privately printed) suffer by comparison with it, and vet I am inclined to agree with Mr. Huckfield's red pencil that some of these things are far from bad. So, too, with the verses of Mrs. Bates many of them so modest as to be commonplace, but with here and there an arresting thought, a saving turn of phrase. For instance, these stanzas from a short poem entitled "Heredity:"

Over the placid waters,
Leaning, we only trace
A dead man's wavering shadow,
A smile on a dead man's face.

Lo, where Ambition beckons, Showing his shining track, Gladly we'd follow upward, But dead hands hold us back.

Vainly we bid them slumber
Where the worm with the grave rat delves;
We struggle, but can't escape them,
For we are the dead ourselves!

The "Summer of Love" (Baker-Taylor) of Mr. Kilmer bears the imprimatur of Richard Le Gallienne, who thinks very well of "The Ballade of My Lady's Beauty." A thing full of "old music," as Mr. Le Gallienne says, but certainly no more melodious than other pieces in this little book. Two such are ballades—one of the butterflies and the other (borrowed from Jean Richepin) of the beggars' king. And two others are ballads

without the Gallic "e"—"The Morning Meditations of Frère Hyacinthus" and "Chevely Cross," both too long to quote, but both showing that galloping tempo and that dramatic structure which make the good ballad. The vice of Mr. Kilmer is an inclination toward mere prettiness; too often his songs are of the courtier more than of the lover. Such things as the following, for example, miss sincerity altogether:

So all the world kneels down to you,
And all things are your own;
Now let a humble rhymer sue
Before your crystal throne.
Fair Queen, at your rose petal feet
Bid me to live and die!
Not all your world of lovers, Sweet,
Can love so much as I.

Which brings us to Miss Teasdale. perhaps the most accomplished singer of the quartette. The key here is often minor—it is unrequited love that gives substance to a full half of the poet's songs—and the form is commonly that of groups of quatrains, sedately trochaic or iambic; but despite this essential austerity. Miss Teasdale manages to get a good deal of color into her lines. More than once, indeed, she strikes fire with a truly beautiful image or phrase. For example, "silken silence." What could better describe the soft, grateful stillness of the night? And such things as this:

> Her voice is like clear water That drips upon a stone.

But mere efflorescence is not in Miss Teasdale's verses. She gets her best effects by simple means; following Lizette Woodworth Reese, she leans toward the Anglo-Saxon word, and particularly toward the stark Anglo-Saxon monosyllable. A typical stanza:

There is no sign of leaf or bud;
A hush is over everything—
Silent as women wait for love,
The world is waiting for the spring.

And a typical song:

I hoped that he would love me, And he has kissed my mouth, But I am like a stricken bird. That cannot reach the south.

For tho' I know he loves me, Tonight my heart is sad; His kiss was not so wonderful As all the dreams I had. Poetry reduced to its elementals—and yet who will miss the genuine feeling in it, and the genuine beauty? It is the very simplicity of the thing, indeed, that gives it its charm. Florid ornament would have broken the back of the song. It had to be written in one certain fragile way, and Miss Teasdale found that way. And so here:

Pierrot stands in the garden Beneath a waning moon, And on his lute he fashions A little silver tune.

Pierrot plays in the garden,
He thinks he plays for me,
But I am quite forgotten
Under the cherry tree.

Pierrot plays in the garden,
And all the roses know
That Pierrot loves his music,
But I love Pierrot.

A slender thing, to be sure. Mere flute music. A pretty phrase or twoand then an end. But in lyric poetry nothing more is necessary to beauty. Song, of course, is hospitable, elastic. It has room for the high, astounding term, the leaping, heart wringing emotion. But it is most itself, I think, when its content is slighter and its mood gentler. Some of the great songs of the world are mere rose petals fluttering in the wind. What else is "Du Bist Wie Eine Blume"? What else is "Hark, Hark, the Lark!"? "Under the Greenwood Tree"? What else are Ariel's songs? Let it not be supposed that I here compare Miss Teasdale's modest verses to these things of supreme loveliness. That would be unfair and silly. A disconcerting ineptness crops up in more than one of her stanzas. Pushing simplicity too far, she occasionally attains to the commonplace, even to the banal. She has a long way to go before she will ever come to William Watson's "April," or to Robert Loveman's rose song, or to any of the exquisite words for music of Arthur Symons, Katharine Tynan, Richard Le Gallienne, Eva Gore Booth and Arthur Stringer, to mention only a few singers, and none of the blood royal. But nevertheless she shows in this little book of hers-"HELEN OF TROY AND OTHER POEMS" (Putnam)—the authentic lyric

touch. She is, in brief, a song maker of genuine promise, and so it is well to welcome her with more than bare politeness.

Now a trio of more familiar bards-John Vance Cheney, Charles Hanson Towne and Clinton Scollard—and all, I regret to say, somewhat disappointing. The trouble with Mr. Scollard is that he yields too easily to the lure of apt allit-A legitimate embellishment, true enough, and not despised by the masters, but still one to be kept at its distance. Here, in "THE LIPS OF THE SEA" (Browning), we have it unceasingly: "dipping deck," "flailed and flayed," "plunging prows," "gray gulls," "golden gates," "spectral sails," "weird and white," "cove and cape," "death's darksome deep," "bluff and bay," "moiling in multitudinous marts," "in-glorious grapple after gold." Worse still, we have hissing processions of sibi-"shifting sand and shingle," "spectral sail or ghostly spar," "sudden subtle swirl," "saw the slanting spar," "Saint Sepulchre's beside the sea," "surge of the waters sever," "turquoise sweep of sky." In the last two examples sibilants actually come together—a sure means of making music hideous. And even discounting this defect, it cannot be said that Mr. Scollard has here made any appreciable contribution to the balladry of the sea. He tells us that the sea is trackless, that it is wrathful, that it is mysterious, that it is lovely; but he does not put those ancient facts into new phrases, nor does he accompany them with fresh discoveries and interpretations. In brief, he is always close to the obvious. Workmanlike and agreeable his songs may be, but they miss emotion and they miss romance.

As for Mr. Towne, he makes a gallant attempt in "Youth" (Kennerley) to lift a sentimental tale to poetic heights. A gallant attempt, but one, I fear, that fails of success. The blank verse is sometimes suave and melodious; it has its dramatic climaxes and its sonorous lines; there is even, now and then, the good surprise of a gipsy phrase—but the fact persists that Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kent are too close to the asphalt and the subway to serve a poet's lay. One thinks of

Deirdre and Naisi, of Paolo and Francesca, of Tristan and Isolde—and the dream vanishes. Thus the lovers in their studio apartment garden:

"I knew it," she would say; "success will come To you, my Donald—it is coming fast, And O, how happy I am for your sake!" Then always he would kiss her, and their eyes Would meet in comprehension, in that bliss That only lovers know. Then he would say, "Tonight, to celebrate, a taxicab Shall take a certain princess for a ride!"

O'Now, Donald," always Lucy's sense of thrift Began protesting, "why do this tonight? Such wild extravagance—such—"

"Never mind,
Dear little hermit of this city cave,
You know how futile your New England qualms
Will ever be with me! So come along;
The steedless coach is waiting at the gate,
And though we are the poorest of the poor,
I_mean to give my wife a glorious time!"

Such is the worst. But even the best in this very bad poem is not worthy of Mr. Towne's past achievements. In the lyrics following he is more at his ease and vastly more convincing. For instance, in this excellent song:

A dead girl stirred beneath the grass,
And lo, a blossom blew;
And we who watched the spring's old joy
A double wonder knew. . .
Flowers are the voices of the dead,
Calling to me and you.

O living language, fragrant still, Though winter hushed your sound, How magical your old words seem As the glad years wheel round! If from our lips such perfume flows, Who fears the quiet ground?

Mr. Cheney's book is called "At the Silver Gate" (Stokes) and is devoted to verses, serious and otherwise, inspired by the romantic traditions and more romantic beauty of Southern California. They are the verses of an accomplished journeyman; you will find no cacophony in them and no cheap sentimentality. And yet they leave me cold. Well, well, what would you? Sometimes it is the reader that nods and not the poet.

Next cometh Folger McKinsey, a newspaper poet whose annual output must come close to 35,000 lines. And yet, for all that staggering emission of parts of speech, Mr. McKinsey still manages, like Frank L. Stanton, to get freshness

and beauty into occasional lyrics. "Songs of the Daily Life" (Williams-Wilkins) is the second volume he has published, but it does him no more justice than its predecessor, "A Rose of the Old Regime." In both books concessions are made to the popular taste, and light things that have chanced to please the poet's newspaper readers crowd out his better work. But even so, you will find enough glowing, colorful verse among these "Songs of the Daily Life" to redeem a far bulkier volume. For example, this liveliest and most Aprilesque of spring songs:

Oh, Miss Springtime, flirting with me In the catkin bud on the willow tree; Winking, blinking, blithe and spry, With a breast full of bloom and a cheek full of sky!

Oh, Miss Springtime, give me your hand,
For a romp in the dell and a race o'er the land,
A breath of the bloom and a cup of the blue,
And a kiss from the lips that are burning for
you!

The procession of the seasons is of constant interest to the poet; some of his best songs are in the manner of that just quoted. Two stanzas from another such:

You will remember the day, and so will I, will I, When a ladder of snow white roses leaned down from a soft blue sky, And there on the violet rungs, with wings of the

featherbloom,

She came tiptoe to our wintry world with a

breath of the May's perfume.

You will remember the day, and so will I, will I, When earth looked up from her wintry sleep to the blue of an April sky;

When out of the cloud and gleam a ladder of roses swung,

And down she came to the barren lanes, violet rung by rung!

In the vast mass of Mr. McKinsey's published verses there are scores of such blithe and beautiful things. He deserves a publisher discriminating enough to select his best. Once that service is done for him, he will attain, I believe, wide and instant recognition. He has a deft hand for the lyric; some of his little songs, wandering about from newspaper to newspaper, come near to perfection in melody and grace.

Only mediocrity is to be found in

"THE STORY OF AMERICA" (Sherman-French), by Henry Frank, a gentleman chiefly known in the past for his quasiscientific writings. Here Mr. Frank seeks to tell the whole story of our fair republic, from the landing of the Vikings to the Battle of Santiago, in a series of sonnets. Having read all of these sonnets, 111 in number, I have to report regretfully that they are all bad. Nearly 150 pages of "historical notes" follow them, thus giving the volume a very impressive fatness. Which brings us at last to the frankly comic poets—Franklin P. Adams and William F. Kirk. All of the verses in Mr. Kirk's "RIGHT OFF THE BAT" (Dillingham) deal with baseball. They do not throb with inspiration, but if you follow the national game you will get amusement out of them. Of a decidedly higher type are the things in Mr. Adams's "Tobogganing on Par-NASSUS" (Doubleday-Page), one of the best collections of humorous verse printed in this country for a long, long time. Mr. Adams is a master of the mechanics of verse making; his rhymes and meters show unflagging fluency and ingenuity. And there is true humor in even the least of his burlesques and pasquinades. For instance, in these lines upon Olga Nethersole:

I like little Olga,
Her plays are so warm;
And if I don't see 'em,
They'll do me no harm.

And in this attempt at a concert program translation of a famous song of Heine's:

Thou art like to a Flower, So pure and clean thou art; I view thee and much Sadness Steals to me in the Heart.

To me it seems my Hands I Should now impose on your Head, praying God to keep you So fine and clean and pure.

All sorts of things are in this slim volume—ballades, triolets, burlesque popular songs, imitations of Horace, parodies of Kipling and Marlowe, epigrams, rondeaux, even a pantoum. In every one of them you will find proofs of shrewd observation and genuine humor. An amusing and excellent little book.

PERTINENT AND IMPERTINENT

By Owen Hatteras

REAMS of CITIES.

Washington—Four men carrying
a Congressman from a saloon
door to a night hack.

New York-A head waiter with six-

teen hands.

Boston—A fireman sitting in the wings at a symphony concert, reading Bergson's "Time and Free Will."

Philadelphia-A stranger frozen in a

block of ice.

Chicago—Overdressed women in gilt barges . . . a river of blood . . . music by Richard Strauss.

Brooklyn—A midwife on the run.

THE one aim of all human endeavor is to make the ultimate embalmer proud of his client.

Contributions to the repertoire of hysterias and neuroses:

Touchophobia, or the fear of relatives. Lohengrinophobia, or the fear of marriage.

Sousophobia, or the fear of katzenjammer.

Kellnerophobia, or the fear of waiters'

Unwrittenlawophobia, or the fear of prowling husbands.

AMERICA—The land of two hundred religions and no religion.

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE

First American—I like a belt that's more loosern what this one is.

Second American—Well, then, why don't you unloosen it more'n you got it unloosened?

An osteopath is one who teaches that human diseases are caused by the abnormal pressure of hard bone upon soft tissue. The proof of his theory is to be found in the heads of those who believe him.

Suggestions looking toward the enrichment of the current vocabulary of profanity:

Hell and theater orchestras! A thousand kilowatts!
Neuritis!

A LITANY: CANTO II.

From wedding invitations, and from the history of the United States; from the piano pieces of Eduard Holst, and from fat women who are afraid of being betrayed; from all plays that run on Broadway more than fifty nights, and from the Emmanuel Movement; from female bachelors of arts, and from physical exercise in all its hideous forms; from editorials in newspapers, and from the theory that it is sinful to chew tobacco; from the streptococci, and from serial novels; from denaturized alcohol, and from chilblains; from the works of Henryk Sienkiewicz, and from chicken salad; from ecclesiastics who essay to be jocose in the pulpit, and from the initiative and referendum; from fresh water oysters, and from labor leaders; from theosophy, and from the genealogical page in the Boston Transcript; from "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and from elderly ladies who sit on the piazzas of summer hotels and swap obstetrical anecdotes: from bier-fisch, and from glassy potatoes; from perfumed cigarettes, and from remorse; from the doctrine of infant damnation, and from Rosa Bonheur's "The Horse Fair"-good Lord, deliver us!

THE main value of a reputation for veracity is that it enables one to lie occasionally without risk.

THE master banalities of art: the "Mona Lisa," "La Dame aux Camélias" and "Celeste Aida."

The master banalities of nature: Niagara Falls, the Gulf Stream and the blood sweating hippopotamus:

TONE ARTISTS

Wagner-The rape of the Sabines : ...

a kommers in Olympus.

Beethoven—The glory that was Greece . . . the grandeur that was Rome . . . a laugh.

Haydn—A seidel on the table . . . a girl on your knee . . . another girl in your

heart.

Chopin—Two embalmers at work upon a minor poet . . . the scent of tuberoses . . . autumn rain.

Richard Strauss-Old Home Week in

Johann Strauss-Forty couples dancing . . . one by one they slip from the hall . . . sounds of kisses . . . the lights go

Puccini—Silver macaroni, exquisitely

tangled.

Debussy—A pretty girl with one blue eye and one brown one...

Bach—Genesis I, r...

Suicide and marriage—the supreme acts of cynicism.

As belligerently self-respecting as an actor. . . .

DITHYRAMBS

Of Alcohol I sing! Alcohol, the reviled and accursed. Alcohol, the butt and sport of moralists. Alcohol, the

Lay on, ye bloodless and ye bilious

ones-killjoys, venomists and doctors of mortification! Lay on, ye mad mullahe of chemical purity! Lay on, pale eremites, translucent as to ear! Swill your well water and sprout your wings! Chill your livers and shine with rectitude! Go to the horned cattle and be good!

As for me, I wet my whistle at other, lovelier founts. As for me, I seek the redder, kindlier juices. Who drinks beside me? Sots and vagabonds, jailbirds and rapscallions, blackguards and false swearers, picaroons and cheats! Barry Lyndon and John Falstaff, Toby Belch and Andrew Aguecheek, Tom Jones and Jack Brute! None other? Ave. many! Captains and bards and prophets, venturers into far seas, makers of songs and cities, truth seekers and conquerors, doers of prodigies, slavers of blue devils! Noah and Caius Julius, Charlemagne and Barbarossa, Horace and Catullus, Ben Jonson and Frankie Rabelais!

Is the day gray? Then here is stuff to pink and gild its sky! Does hope fall? Then here is stuff to lift it up! Is love dead? Then here is stuff to make the carcass dance! I give you a balsam better than poppy or mandragora. I give you that which finds the sore heart and heals I give you that which says avaunt to weariness and all dismay. Here is beauty. Here is music. Here is joy. Here is silver moonlight while the tempest roars. Here are fields of clover bloom. Here is blessed sleep.

Who hath a bottle and a glass? Then he is wise. Then he is rich. Then he is a poet and a lover, a lord of wide meadows, a farer on porphyry seas, a climber of mountain peaks, a dreamer of golden dreams. Who hath woe? Who hath neuralgia? Who hath creditors? Who hath relatives-in-law? Who hath vipers in

his bosom? Not hel

Is there a drop left? A cup? A long, luscious swallow? Then the day is fair! Then the clouds are wreaths of roses! Then the rain is gold and violets! Then sorrow is a charlatan! Then death, the playboy, lies snoozing in the straw!



SOMETHING PERSONAL

By the Publisher

ANY magazine publishers seem to assume that about June the human brain undergoes a mysterious change for the worse. Hence the so-called "summer numbers," dished up for hammock consumption. THE SMART SET vigorously dissents from this absurd dogma. We hold that in the vacation days, if ever, a publisher should give his readers the very best magazine he can produce. This is not guesswork, guff or professional philanthropy. Our belief is grounded on facts. We know that the public appreciates a magazine which maintains its standard all the year round. We know it because in the summer, when the sales of other magazines drop off, THE SMART SET goes merrily on selling better than ever. Watch it at the resorts.

Rely upon us, therefore, in the dog days. Your motor trip may prove an orgy of bursting tires, your bungalow may develop a leaky roof, your golf game may become the derision of the links, but the cool-looking magazine in the cadet gray cover will not fail you. You will like those summer covers, by the way. Several of them will be by Mr. Alonzo Kimball, who is responsible for the striking design of the present issue. But it is of the contents that we wish particularly to speak.

First a word about novels. The old-fashioned publisher would give you the "chocolate cream" variety mentioned elsewhere in this issue—"all dark and mysterious on the outside and delightfully mushy in the middle." You will not meet that type in our "summer" numbers. In fact, we have so much respect for your hot weather judgment that we plan to give you one novel of

such power and realism that next winter will find you still discussing it. Strong language? Yes, and our staff is not given to reckless enthusiasm. This remarkable piece of work, entitled "Her Soul and Body," is by Louise Closser Hale, whose one-act plays and sprightly comment in "The Trunk in the Attic" have made her name familiar to SMART SET readers.

The "Trunk," of course, goes its way with the next issue. We have received enough letters to continue it for years, letters of wide range and extraordinary quality, but popular as the department has proved, we must turn the key as scheduled and devote the space to other things. One of those things is a series of articles on the great cities of America, and that it will be an unusual series goes without saying. No one who knows the "magazine of cleverness" will look for conventional travel papers. We believe that each of the great cities of America has a distinct individuality.

Is that idea new to you? Think it over. What does the mention of Pittsburgh bring to your mind? Black smoke—and the modern philosopher's stone that changes steel billets into gold eagles: the exultant cry of the dreamer and the doer. Chicago? A mighty overgrown figure of youthful energy, elbowing competitors aside, shouting "I will!" Philadelphia? A man asleep on a bench in the park. Salt Lake City? A patriarch with seven wives. Oshkosh? A musical comedy rube. Milwaukee—St. Louis? An animated pretzel crowned with foam.

Yes, cities are like individuals. Some are quiet and reserved with the dignity of matured growth; others are restless, bustling, uncertain, boisterous. Some go

in for art and culture: some develop their great industrial and economic muscular make-up; some flaunt their beauty in the eyes of the beholder and seek to lure the world to their arms; some draw their robes with dignity about them, secure in their age-old glory and prestige. Your city has a distinct personality; what is it? Here is a problem for your Sunday afternoon stroll. We have assigned each of our great cities—and some of Europe—to an expert who can with wit and insight say precisely what its individuality is. Edgar Saltus, Henry L. Mencken, Charles Macomb Flandrau and Gelett Burgess are among the writers who will contribute. This will be a unique and original series. The men we have selected to do these articles have taken up the idea with enthusiasm.

But these features we have singled out are by no means the whole story. Every issue will be of exceptional interest and quality throughout. If there were space we would tell you of our other novels, our short fiction, our essays, our plays, our verse; but the constant readers of The Smart Set know what to expect of us. We go on our way unruffled by the pessimists who bewail the short story "famine." declare essay writing a lost art and insist that the real poets are all under ground. We are calm because we are more interested in ideas than great names, and are ever ready to give the beginner a chance.

The beginner is often uncertain of the right method of approach, however. Someone wrote us the other day asking if we would examine a story the writer

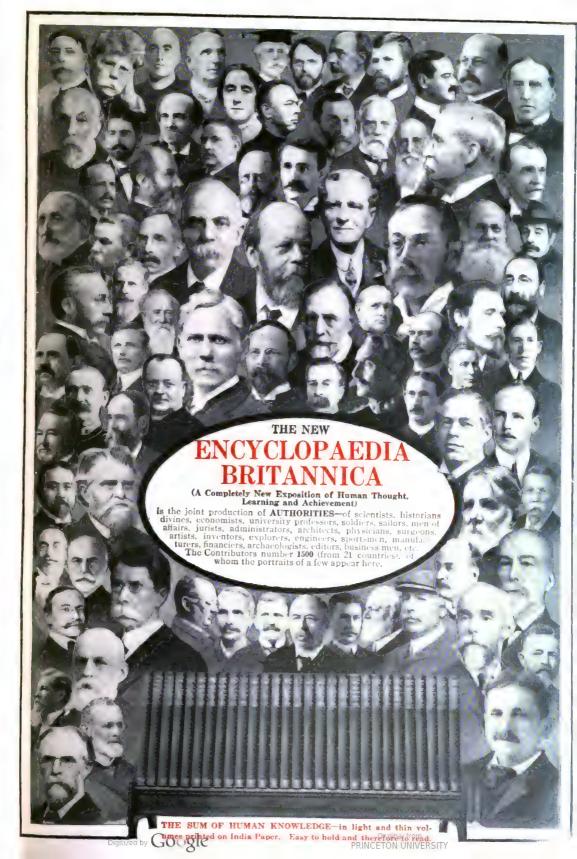
had just completed. Another would-be litterateur inquired if contributions from anyone outside our "regular staff of writers" would be considered. A third asked if it were true that, to have their work accepted, authors had to have a certain social standing—and appended documents to prove her descent from old Colonel Blank, who served on Washington's staff, and her relationship to the well known Dash family of Georgia.

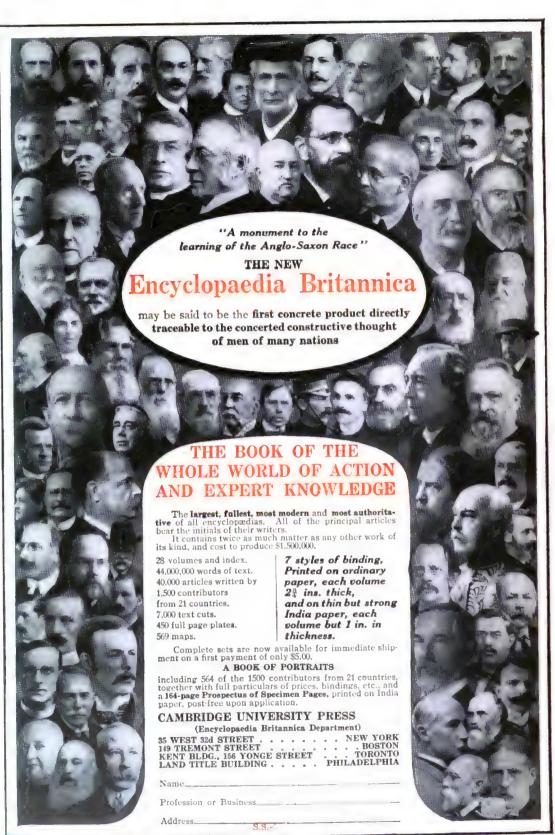
Once every so often a certain amount of ink and paper must be used up to answer just such questions, though why any information should be needed along these particular lines we do not know. Anyhow, here is the answer—it may

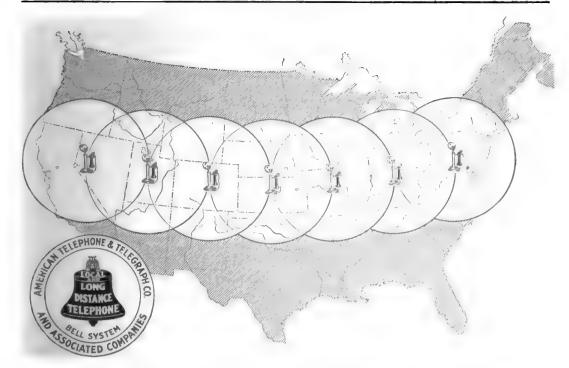
save someone postage:

THE SMART SET is anxious to secure the best literary material conforming to its standard that is to be had. We have no "regular staff of writers;" we scour the field for what is new and clever, and, provided the material is what we want. and is neither a translation, an adaptation nor a plagiarism, it is immaterial to us whether the author is a leader of society in ultra-aristocratic Charleston or a deckhand on one of Uncle Sam's submarines. We are the city of refuge of the gifted but unrecognized beginner. the one publication that prides itself on its search for the unknown genius; and to find him we are ready and eager to examine with impartial fidelity and zeal any contribution that may be sent to us from any quarter whatsoever. So send us your offerings-but remember that the use of a typewriter will save many a case of eye strain.

John adams thayer







The Chain of Communication

EACH Bell Telephone is the center of the system. This system may be any size or any shape, with lines radiating from any subscriber's telephone, like the spokes of a wheel, to the limits of the subscriber's requirements, whether ten miles or a thousand.

Somewhere on the edge of this subscriber's radius is another who requires a radius of lines stretching still further away. On the edge of this second subscriber's radius is still a third, whose requirements mean a further extension of the lines, and so on.

This endless chain of systems may be illustrated by a series of overlapping circles. Each additional subscriber becomes a new

center with an extended radius of communication, reaching other subscribers.

However small the radius, the step-by-step extension from neighbor to neighbor must continue across the continent without a stopping place, until the requirements of every individual have been met.

There can be no limit to the extension of telephone lines until the whole country is covered. There can be no limit to the system of which each Bell telephone is the center, up to the greatest distance that talk can be carried.

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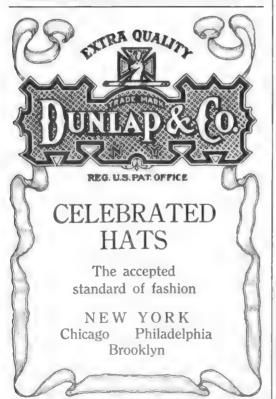


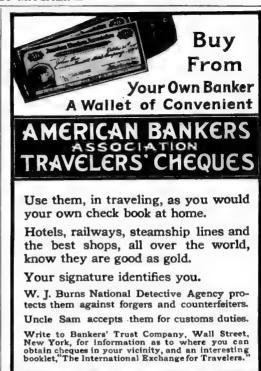
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The aging of a cocktail is as necessary to perfect flavor as the aging of wine or whisky.

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The Carthusian Monks (Pères Chartreux), and they alone, have the formula or recipe of the secret process employed in the manufacture of the genuine Chartreuse, and have never parted with it. There is no genuine Chartreuse save that made by them at Tarragona, Spain.

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E have several thousand gallons of Gibson's Celebrated Rye Whiskey distilled more than eleven years ago, and never taken out of the wood; ripened and mellowed by the mature methods of time; smooth and delicate, with

a wonderful bouquet—a whiskey too fine to market in the ordinary way. It will be drawn in one-gallon demijohns, boxed, sealed and shipped direct from our warehouse to the order of your dealer—or to personal address—at Ten Dollars per gallon/

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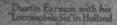
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